

APPLICATION
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TITLE: NEMATODE PAN AND ZP RECEPTOR-LIKE SEQUENCES

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Nematode PAN and ZP Receptor-like Sequences

RELATED APPLICATION INFORMATION

This application claims priority from U.S. provisional application serial no.
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BACKGROUND

Nematodes (derived from the Greek word for thread) are active, flexible, elongate, organisms that live on moist surfaces or in liquid environments, including films of water within soil and moist tissues within other organisms. While only 20,000 species of nematode
10 have been identified, it is estimated that 40,000 to 10 million actually exist. Some species of nematodes have evolved to be very successful parasites of both plants and animals and are responsible for significant economic losses in agriculture and livestock and for morbidity and mortality in humans (Whitehead (1998) *Plant Nematode Control*, CAB International, New York).

15 Nematode parasites of plants can inhabit all parts of plants, including roots, developing flower buds, leaves, and stems. Plant parasites are classified on the basis of their feeding habits into the broad categories: migratory ectoparasites, migratory endoparasites, and sedentary endoparasites. Sedentary endoparasites, which include the root knot nematodes (*Meloidogyne*) and cyst nematodes (*Globodera* and *Heterodera*) induce feeding
20 sites and establish long-term infections within roots that are often very damaging to crops (Whitehead, *supra*). It is estimated that parasitic nematodes cost the horticulture and agriculture industries in excess of \$78 billion worldwide a year, based on an estimated average 12% annual loss spread across all major crops. For example, it is estimated that nematodes cause soybean losses of approximately \$3.2 billion annually worldwide (Barker et
25 al. (1994) *Plant and Soil Nematodes: Societal Impact and Focus for the Future*. The Committee on National Needs and Priorities in Nematology. Cooperative State Research Service, US Department of Agriculture and Society of Nematologists). Several factors make the need for safe and effective nematode controls urgent. Continuing population growth, famines, and environmental degradation have heightened concern for the sustainability of

agriculture, and new government regulations may prevent or severely restrict the use of many available agricultural anthelmintic agents.

The situation is particularly dire for high value crops such as strawberries and tomatoes where chemicals have been used extensively to control soil pests. The soil fumigant methyl bromide has been used effectively to reduce nematode infestations in a variety of these specialty crops. It is however regulated under the U.N. Montreal Protocol as an ozone-depleting substance and is scheduled for elimination in 2005 in the US (Carter (2001) *California Agriculture*, 55(3):2). It is expected that strawberry and other commodity crop industries will be significantly impacted if a suitable replacement for methyl bromide is not found. Presently there are a very small array of chemicals available to control nematodes and they are frequently inadequate, unsuitable, or too costly for some crops or soils (Becker (1999) *Agricultural Research Magazine* 47(3):22-24; US Pat. Nos. 6,048,714). The few available broad-spectrum nematicides such as Telone (a mixture of 1,3-dichloropropene and chloropicrin) have significant restrictions on their use because of toxicological concerns (Carter (2001) *California Agriculture*, Vol. 55(3):12-18).

The macrocyclic lactones (e.g., avermectins and milbemycins) and delta-toxins from *Bacillus thuringiensis* (*Bt*) are nematicidal actives that in principle provide excellent specificity and efficacy and should allow environmentally safe control of plant parasitic nematodes. Unfortunately, in practice, these two approaches have proven less effective for agricultural applications against root pathogens. Although certain avermectins show exquisite activity against plant parasitic nematodes these chemicals are hampered by poor bioavailability due to their light sensitivity, degradation by soil microorganisms and tight binding to soil particles (Lasota & Dybas (1990) *Acta Leiden* 59(1-2):217-225; Wright & Perry (1998) *Musculature and Neurobiology*. In: *The Physiology and Biochemistry of Free-Living and Plant-parasitic Nematodes* (eds R.N. Perry & D.J. Wright), CAB International 1998). Consequently despite years of research and extensive use against animal parasitic nematodes, mites and insects (plant and animal applications), macrocyclic lactones (e.g., avermectins and milbemycins) have never been commercially developed to control plant parasitic nematodes in the soil.

Bt delta toxins must be ingested to affect their target organ, the brush border of midgut epithelial cells (Marroquin et al. (2000) *Genetics*. 155(4):1693-1699). Consequently

they are not anticipated to be effective against the dispersal, non-feeding, juvenile stages of plant parasitic nematodes in the field. Because juvenile stages only commence feeding when a susceptible host has been infected, nematicides may need to penetrate the plant cuticle to be effective. In addition, soil mobility of a relatively large 65-130 kDa protein - the size of
 5 typical *Bt* delta toxins - is expected to be poor and transgenic delivery *in planta* is likely to be constrained by the exclusion of large particles by the feeding tube of certain plant parasitic nematodes such as *Heterodera* (Atkinson et al. (1998) Engineering resistance to plant-parasitic nematodes. In: The Physiology and Biochemistry of Free-Living and Plant-parasitic Nematodes (eds R.N. Perry & D.J. Wright), CAB International 1998).

10 Many plant species are known to be highly resistant to nematodes. The best documented of these include marigolds (*Tagetes* spp.), rattlebox (*Crotalaria spectabilis*), chrysanthemums (*Chrysanthemum* spp.), castor bean (*Ricinus communis*), margosa (*Azadiracta indica*), and many members of the family *Asteraceae* (family *Compositae*) (Hackney & Dickerson. (1975) *J Nematol* 7(1):84-90). In the case of the *Asteraceae*, the
 15 photodynamic compound alpha-terthienyl has been shown to account for the strong nematicidal activity of the roots. Castor beans are plowed under as a green manure before a seed crop is set. However, a significant drawback of the castor plant is that the seed contains toxic compounds (such as ricin) that can kill humans, pets, and livestock and is also highly allergenic. In many cases however, the active principle(s) for plant nematicidal activity has
 20 not been discovered and it remains difficult to derive commercially successful nematicidal products from these resistant plants or to transfer the resistance to agronomically important crops such as soybeans and cotton.

There remains an urgent need to develop environmentally safe, target-specific ways of controlling plant parasitic nematodes. In the specialty crop markets, economic hardship
 25 resulting from nematode infestation is highest in strawberries, bananas, and other high value vegetables and fruits. In the high-acreage crop markets, nematode damage is greatest in soybeans and cotton. There are however, dozens of additional crops that suffer from nematode infestation including potato, pepper, onion, citrus, coffee, sugarcane, greenhouse ornamentals and golf course turf grasses.

30 Nematode parasites of vertebrates (e.g., humans, livestock and companion animals) include gut roundworms, hookworms, pinworms, whipworms, and filarial worms. They can

be transmitted in a variety of ways, including by water contamination, skin penetration, biting insects, or by ingestion of contaminated food.

In domesticated animals, nematode control or “de-worming” is essential to the economic viability of livestock producers and is a necessary part of veterinary care of companion animals. Parasitic nematodes cause mortality in animals (e.g., heartworm in dogs and cats) and morbidity as a result of the parasites’ inhibiting the ability of the infected animal to absorb nutrients. The parasite-induced nutrient deficiency leads to disease and stunted growth in livestock and companion animals. For instance, in cattle and dairy herds, a single untreated infection with the brown stomach worm can permanently restrict an animal’s ability to convert feed into muscle mass or milk.

Two factors contribute to the need for novel anthelmintics and vaccines for control of parasitic nematodes of animals. First, some of the more prevalent species of parasitic nematodes of livestock are building resistance to the anthelmintic drugs available currently, meaning that these products will eventually lose their efficacy. These developments are not surprising because few effective anthelmintic drugs are available and most have been used continuously. Some parasitic species have developed resistance to most of the anthelmintics (Geents et al. (1997) *Parasitology Today* 13:149-151; Prichard (1994) *Veterinary Parasitology* 54:259-268). The fact that many of the anthelmintic drugs have similar modes of action complicates matters, as the loss of sensitivity of the parasite to one drug is often accompanied by side resistance – that is, resistance to other drugs in the same class (Sangster & Gill (1999) *Parasitology Today* 15(4):141-146). Secondly, there are some issues with toxicity for the major compounds currently available.

Infections by parasitic nematode worms result in substantial human mortality and morbidity, especially in tropical regions of Africa, Asia, and the Americas. The World Health Organization estimates 2.9 billion people are infected, and in some areas, 85% of the population carries worms. While mortality is rare in proportion to infections, morbidity is substantial and rivals diabetes and lung cancer in worldwide disability adjusted life year (DALY) measurements.

Examples of human parasitic nematodes include hookworms, filarial worms, and pinworms. Hookworms (1.3 billion infections) are the major cause of anemia in millions of children, resulting in growth retardation and impaired cognitive development. Filarial worm

species invade the lymphatics, resulting in permanently swollen and deformed limbs (elephantiasis), and the eyes, causing African river blindness. The large gut roundworm *Ascaris lumbricoides* infects more than one billion people worldwide and causes malnutrition and obstructive bowel disease. In developed countries, pinworms are common and often
5 transmitted through children in daycare.

Even in asymptomatic parasitic infections, nematodes can still deprive the host of valuable nutrients and increase the ability of other organisms to establish secondary infections. In some cases, infections can cause debilitating illnesses and can result in anemia, diarrhea, dehydration, loss of appetite, or death.

10 Despite some advances in drug availability and public health infrastructure and the near elimination of one tropical nematode (the water-borne Guinea worm), most nematode diseases have remained intractable problems. Treatment of hookworm diseases with anthelmintic drugs, for instance, has not provided adequate control in regions of high incidence because rapid re-infection occurs after treatment. In fact, over the last 50 years,
15 while nematode infection rates have fallen in the United States, Europe, and Japan, the overall number of infections worldwide has kept pace with the growing world population. Large scale initiatives by regional governments, the World Health Organization, foundations, and pharmaceutical companies are now underway attempting to control nematode infections with currently available tools, including three programs for control of Onchocerciasis (river
20 blindness) in Africa and the Americas using ivermectin and vector control; The Global Alliance to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis using DEC, albendazole, and ivermectin; and the highly successful Guinea Worm Eradication Program.

The obvious missing weapons in the fight to control human parasitic nematodes are vaccines. Systematic vaccination against childhood diseases like measles, mumps, polio,
25 etc. has been among the most important and cost effective factors increasing lifespan and wellness in the developed world over the course of the 20th century. Expansion of these health gains into the developing world using existing vaccines, as the Gates Foundation is supporting, has the potential to capture immediate health gains. Such an approach could be equally effective for nematodes if such vaccines existed.

30 Research into vaccines for parasites, from malaria to nematode worms, has shown parasites to be challenging organisms to control by immunization since, unlike many viruses,

antibody or cellular responses to most surface antigens fail to result in control. However, multiple vaccines for the control of nematode parasites in animals have shown efficacy either in testing or in veterinary use. For example, vaccination of dogs with irradiated hookworm larva results in high levels of protection to subsequent hookworm challenge. The same approach works for protection of gerbils from filarial worms. Unfortunately, parasitic nematodes cannot be grown in the quantities required for such a killed whole organism vaccination approach, with limited exceptions such as the Intervet niche product HuskVac™ for cattle lungworm. The greatest commercial success to date in immunization for veterinary parasites has come from the recombinant antigen vaccines TickGARD™ and Gavac™ for cattle which block the lifecycle of the ectoparasite *Boophilus microplus*, a bovine tick. Rather than utilizing a surface antigen, each of these vaccines targets an antigen, Bm86, expressed on the luminal surface of the tick mid-gut so that as the ectoparasite drinks the host's blood, it is exposed to antibodies that interfere with intestinal function. The same intestinal target approach has been successful in small-scale trials against the sheep parasitic nematode *Haemonchus*, a blood feeder similar to hookworms that can be controlled by vaccination with the purified parasite intestinal microvilli protein H11. Importantly, unlike a typical vaccine where the antigen is used to trigger a cascade of immune attack on the entire organism, the parasite intestinal approach utilizes an antibody response to "knockout" the function of a crucial nematode gene product, similar to the function of a drug.

Finding effective compounds and vaccines against parasitic nematodes has been complicated by the fact that the parasites have not been amenable to culturing in the laboratory. Parasitic nematodes are often obligate parasites (i.e., they can only complete their lifecycles in their respective hosts, such as in plants, animals, and/or humans) with slow generation times. Thus, they are difficult to grow under artificial conditions, making genetic and molecular experimentation difficult or impossible. To circumvent these limitations, scientists have used *Caenorhabditis elegans* as a model system for parasitic nematode discovery efforts.

C. elegans is a small free-living bacteriovorous nematode that for many years has served as an important model system for multicellular animals (Burglin (1998) *Int. J. Parasitol.* 28(3):395-411). The genome of *C. elegans* has been completely sequenced and the nematode shares many general developmental and basic cellular processes with

vertebrates (Ruvkin et al. (1998) *Science* 282:2033-41). This, together with its short generation time and ease of culturing, has made it a model system of choice for higher eukaryotes (Aboobaker et al. (2000) *Ann. Med.* 32:23-30).

Although *C. elegans* serves as a good model system for vertebrates, it is an even better model for study of parasitic nematodes, as *C. elegans* and other nematodes share unique biological processes not found in vertebrates. For example, unlike vertebrates, nematodes produce and use chitin, have gap junctions comprised of innexin rather than connexin and contain glutamate-gated chloride channels rather than glycine-gated chloride channels (Bargmann (1998) *Science* 282:2028-33). The latter property is of particular relevance given that the avermectin class of drugs is thought to act at glutamate-gated chloride receptors and is highly selective for invertebrates (Martin (1997) *Vet. J.* 154:11-34).

A subset of the genes involved in nematode-specific processes will be conserved in nematodes and absent or significantly diverged from homologues in other phyla. In other words, it is expected that at least some of the genes associated with functions unique to nematodes will have restricted phylogenetic distributions. The completion of the *C. elegans* genome project and the growing database of expressed sequence tags (ESTs) from numerous nematodes facilitate identification of these “nematode-specific” genes. In addition, conserved genes involved in nematode-specific processes are expected to retain the same or very similar functions in different nematodes. This functional equivalence has been demonstrated in some cases by transforming *C. elegans* with homologous genes from other nematodes (Kwa et al. (1995) *J. Mol. Biol.* 246:500-10; Redmond et al. (2001) *Mol. Biochem. Parasitol.* 112:125-131). This sort of data transfer has been shown in cross phyla comparisons for conserved genes and is expected to be more robust among species within a phylum. Consequently, *C. elegans* and other free-living nematode species are likely excellent surrogates for parasitic nematodes with respect to conserved nematode processes.

Many expressed genes in *C. elegans* and certain genes in other free-living nematodes can be “knocked out” genetically by a process referred to as RNA interference (RNAi), a technique that provides a powerful experimental tool for the study of gene function in nematodes (Fire et al. (1998) *Nature* 391(6669):806-811; Montgomery et al. (1998) *Proc. Natl. Acad Sci USA* 95(26):15502-15507). Treatment of a nematode with double-stranded RNA of a selected gene triggers the destruction of expressed sequences transcribed from that

gene, thus reducing or eliminating expression of the corresponding protein. By preventing the translation of specific proteins, their functional significance and essentiality to the nematode can be assessed. Determination of essential genes and their corresponding proteins using *C. elegans* as a model system will assist in the rational design of anti-parasitic
 5 nematode control products.

SUMMARY

The invention features nucleic acid molecules encoding *Strongyloides stercoralis*, *Meloidogyne javanica*, *Heterodera glycines* and *Brugia malayi* PANZP proteins, e.g., PANZP1 and PANZP2. *S. stercoralis* is a nematode parasite that infects humans, primates,
 10 and dogs. It is one of the few nematodes that can multiply within its host and can multiply unchecked in immunosuppressed individuals. *M. javanica* is a Root Knot Nematode that causes substantial damage to several crops, including cotton, tobacco, pepper, and tomato. *H. glycines*, referred to as Soybean Cyst Nematode, is a major pest of soybean. *B. malayi*, is an arthropod vectored human parasite that is one of a causative agents of lymphatic filariasis,
 15 a disease that afflicts roughly 120 million people world wide. The PANZP proteins of the invention resemble the *Drosophila melanogaster* no-mechanoreceptor potential A (nompA) and Sp71 proteins. The PANZP proteins of the invention include Plasminogen Apple Nematode (PAN) and Zona Pellucida (ZP) domains.

The PANZP nucleic acids and polypeptides of the invention allow for the
 20 identification of nematode species. The nucleic acids and polypeptides of the invention also allow for the identification of compounds that bind to or alter the activity of PANZP polypeptides as well as compounds that alter the expression of PANZP polypeptides. Such compounds may provide a means for combating diseases and infestations caused by nematodes, particularly those caused by *S. stercoralis*, *M. javanica*, *H. glycines* and *B.*
 25 *malayi* (e.g., in mammals and plants). These nucleic acids and polypeptides also allow for the vaccination of animals and humans against nematode parasites. In addition, anti-nematode peptide or protein inhibitors and antibodies directed against nematode PAN and ZP containing proteins can be expressed in plants (plantibodies) to produce transgenic nematode resistance.

The invention is based, in part, on the identification of a cDNA encoding *S. stercoralis* PANZP1 (SEQ ID NO: 1). This 3750 nucleotide cDNA has a 3369 nucleotide open reading frame (SEQ ID NO: 5) encoding an 1122 amino acid polypeptide (SEQ ID NO: 3). The nucleotide and amino acid sequence of *S. stercoralis* PANZP1 is shown in FIGs. 1A-1C.

The invention is also based, in part, on the identification of a cDNA encoding *S. stercoralis* PANZP2 (SEQ ID NO: 2). This 1951 nucleotide cDNA has a 1674 nucleotide open reading frame (SEQ ID NO: 6) encoding a 557 amino acid polypeptide (SEQ ID NO: 4). The nucleotide and amino acid sequence of *S. stercoralis* PANZP2 is shown in FIGs. 2A-2B.

The invention is also based, in part, on the identification of a cDNA encoding *M. javanica* PANZP1 (SEQ ID NO: 7). This 3848 nucleotide cDNA has a 3633 nucleotide open reading frame (SEQ ID NO: 13) encoding a 1210 amino acid polypeptide (SEQ ID NO: 10). The nucleotide and amino acid sequence of *M. javanica* PANZP2 is shown in FIGs. 3A-3C.

The invention is also based, in part, on the identification of a partial cDNA fragment encoding *H. glycines* PANZP1 (SEQ ID NO: 8). This 752 nucleotide partial cDNA fragment has a 750 nucleotide open reading frame (SEQ ID NO: 14) encoding a 250 amino acid polypeptide (SEQ ID NO: 11). The nucleotide and amino acid sequence of *H. glycines* PANZP2 is shown in FIG. 4.

The invention is also based, in part, on the identification of a partial cDNA fragment encoding *B. malayi* PANZP1 (SEQ ID NO: 9). This 2808 nucleotide partial cDNA fragment has a 2643 nucleotide open reading frame (SEQ ID NO: 15) encoding a 881 amino acid polypeptide (SEQ ID NO: 12). The nucleotide and amino acid sequence of *B. malayi* PANZP2 is shown in FIGs. 5A-5B.

In one aspect, the invention features novel nematode PAN and ZP containing receptor-like polypeptides. Such polypeptides include purified polypeptides having the amino acid sequences set forth in SEQ ID NO: 3, 4, 10, 11 and/or 12. Also included are polypeptides having an amino acid sequence that is at least about 80%, 85%, 90%, 95%, or 98% identical to SEQ ID NO: 3, 4, 10, 11 and/or 12 as well as polypeptides having a sequence that differs from that of SEQ ID NO: 3, 4, 10, 11 and/or 12 at 20, 15, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, or 1 residues (amino acids). The purified polypeptides can be encoded by a

nematode gene, e.g., a nematode gene other than a *C. elegans* gene. For example, the purified polypeptide has a sequence other than SEQ ID NO: 16, 17, and 18 (*C. elegans* PANZP1 and PANZP2 proteins). The purified polypeptides can further include a heterologous amino acid sequence, e.g., an amino-terminal or carboxy-terminal sequence.

5 Also featured are purified polypeptide fragments of the aforementioned PANZP polypeptides, e.g., a fragment of at least about 20, 30, 40, 50, 75, 85, 104, 106, 113 150, 200, 250 amino acids. Non-limiting examples of such fragments include: fragments from about amino acid 20 to 110 and 100 to 210 of SEQ ID NO: 3, 4, 10, 11 and/or 12 and 200 to 310, 300 to 400 and 400 to 500 of SEQ ID NO: 3, 4, 10 and/or 12. The polypeptide or fragment
10 thereof can be modified, e.g., processed, truncated, modified (e.g. by glycosylation, phosphorylation, acetylation, myristylation, prenylation, palmitoylation, amidation, addition of glycerophosphatidyl inositol), or any combination of the above. Certain PANZP polypeptides comprise a sequence of 600, 700, 800, 900, 1000, 1100, 1200, 1300 amino acids or fewer. The invention also features polypeptides comprising, consisting essentially of
15 or consisting of the aforementioned polypeptides. Also within the invention are polypeptides, including immunogenic polypeptides comprising (or consisting of or consisting essentially of) a PAN or ZP domain of SEQ ID NO: 3, 4, 10, 11, or 12, e.g., a PAN or ZP domain listed in Table 3.

In another aspect, the invention features novel isolated nucleic acid molecules
20 encoding nematode PAN and ZP containing receptor-like polypeptides. Such isolated nucleic acid molecules include nucleic acids having the nucleotide sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO: 1, 2, 7, 8 or SEQ ID NO: 9. Also included are isolated nucleic acid molecules having the same sequence as or encoding the same polypeptide as a nematode PAN and ZP containing receptor-like gene (other than a *C. elegans* PANZP genes).

25 Also featured are: 1) isolated nucleic acid molecules having a strand that hybridizes under low stringency conditions to a single stranded probe of the sequences of SEQ ID NO: 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, or their complements and, optionally, encodes polypeptides of between 500 and 1300 amino acids; 2) isolated nucleic acid molecules having a strand that hybridizes under high stringency conditions to a single stranded probe of the sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1, 2, 7,
30 8, 9 or their complements and, optionally, encodes polypeptides of between 500 and 1300 amino acids; 3) isolated nucleic acid fragments of a PANZP nucleic acid molecule, e.g., a

fragment of SEQ ID NO: 1, 2, 7, 8 or 9 that is about 50, 100, 150, 200, 250, 300, 350, 400, 450, 500, 1000, 1500, 2000, 2500, 3000 and 3500 or more nucleotides in length or ranges between such lengths; and 4) oligonucleotides that are complementary to a PANZP nucleic acid molecule or a PANZP nucleic acid complement, e.g., an oligonucleotide or probe of about 10, 15, 18, 20, 22, 24, 28, 30, 35, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, or more nucleotides in length. Exemplary oligonucleotides are oligonucleotides which anneal to a site located between nucleotides about 1 to 96, 1 to 180, 1 to 270, 1 to 324, 96 to 324, 96 to 345, 324 to 345, 324 to 603, 345 to 603, 345 to 618, 603 to 618, 603 to 752 of SEQ ID NO: 1, 2, 7, 8 or 9; 618 to 1197, 906 to 1524, 1524 to 1951 of SEQ ID NO: 1, 2, 7 or 9; 1197 to 2124, 1524 to 2808 of SEQ ID NO: 1, 7, or 9; 1197 to 2124, 1524 to 3750 of SEQ ID NO: 1 or 7; 1197 to 2124, 1524 to 3848 of SEQ ID NO: 7. Nucleic acid fragments include the following non-limiting examples: nucleotides about 1 to 200 of SEQ ID NO: 1, 2, 7, 8, or 9, 100 to 300, 200 to 400, 300 to 500, 400 to 700, 500 to 800, 600 to 1200, 1200 to 1951 of SEQ ID NO: 1, 2, 7, or 9, 1200 to 2808 of SEQ ID NO: 1, 7 or 9; 1200 to 3750 of SEQ ID NO: 1 or 7, 1200 to 3848 of SEQ ID NO: 7. Also within the invention are nucleic acid molecules that hybridize under stringent conditions to nucleic acid molecule comprising SEQ ID NO: 1, 2, 7, 8 or 9 and comprise 4000, 3000, 2000, 1000 or fewer nucleotides. The isolated nucleic acid can further include a heterologous promoter or other sequences required for transcription or translation of the nucleic acid molecule in a cell, e.g., a mammalian or eukaryotic or prokaryotic cell, operably linked to the PANZP nucleic acid molecule. The isolated nucleic acid molecule can encode a polypeptide having PAN and ZP containing receptor-like function.

A molecule featured herein can be from a nematode of the class *Araeolaimida*, *Ascaridida*, *Chromadorida*, *Desmodorida*, *Diplogasterida*, *Monhysterida*, *Mononchida*, *Oxyurida*, *Rhigonematida*, *Spirurida*, *Enoplia*, *Desmoscolecidae*, *Rhabditida*, or *Tylenchida*. Alternatively, the molecule can be from a species of the class *Rhabditida*, particularly a species other than *C. elegans*.

In another aspect, the invention features a vector, e.g., a vector containing an aforementioned nucleic acid. The vector can further include one or more regulatory elements, e.g., a heterologous promoter or elements required for translation. The regulatory elements for directing transcription and translation elements can be suitable for expression in bacteria, plants, animals, or insects. The regulatory elements can be operably linked to the

PAN and ZP containing receptor-like nucleic acid molecules in order to express a PANZP nucleic acid molecule. In yet another aspect, the invention features a transgenic cell or transgenic organism having in its genome a transgene containing an aforementioned PANZP nucleic acid molecule and a heterologous nucleic acid, e.g., a heterologous promoter.

5 In still another aspect, the invention features an antibody, e.g., an antibody, antibody fragment, or derivative thereof that binds specifically to an aforementioned polypeptide. Such antibodies can be polyclonal or monoclonal antibodies. The antibodies can be modified, e.g., humanized, rearranged as a single-chain, or CDR-grafted. The antibodies may be directed against a fragment, a peptide, or a discontinuous epitope from a PANZP
10 polypeptide. The antibody need not include domain that trigger an immune response.

 In another aspect, the invention features a method of screening for a compound that binds to a nematode PANZP polypeptide, e.g., an aforementioned polypeptide. The method includes providing the nematode polypeptide; contacting a test compound to the polypeptide; and detecting binding of the test compound to the nematode polypeptide. In one
15 embodiment, the method further includes contacting the test compound to a mammalian PAN or ZP domain-containing polypeptide and detecting binding of the test compound to the mammalian PAN or ZP polypeptide in order to identify compounds with selective binding activity. A test compound that binds the nematode PANZP polypeptide with at least 2-fold, 5-fold, 10-fold, 20-fold, 50-fold, or 100-fold affinity greater relative to its affinity for the
20 mammalian (e.g., a human) PAN or ZP polypeptide can be identified.

 The invention also features methods for identifying compounds that alter (increases or decreases) the association of a nematode PAN and ZP containing domain receptor-like polypeptide with a substrate such as a small molecule or protein. The method includes contacting the test compound to the nematode PANZP polypeptide; and detecting a decrease
25 in the binding of the PANZP protein to the substrate. A decrease in the level of PANZP polypeptide binding to the substrate relative to the PANZP polypeptide binding to the substrate in the absence of the test compound is an indication that the test compound is an inhibitor of the PANZP activity. The inhibitor can be a direct competitor of the binding or an allosteric inhibitor that prevents binding of the PANZP polypeptide to other molecules or
30 proteins. Such inhibitory compounds are potential selective agents for reducing the viability of a nematode expressing a PANZP polypeptide, e.g., *S. stercoralis*, *M. javanica*, *H. glycines*

and *B. malayi*. These methods can also include contacting the compound with a vertebrate PAN containing protein (e.g., human Factor XI) or a vertebrate ZP containing polypeptide (e.g., human uromodulin) and detecting binding of the compounds to the proteins. A compound that binds to the nematode PAN and ZP containing receptor-like polypeptides to a greater extent than it binds to vertebrate PAN or ZP polypeptides could be useful as a selective inhibitor of the nematode polypeptide. A desirable compound can exhibit 2-fold, 5-fold, 10-fold, 20-fold, 50-fold, 100-fold or greater selective affinity against the nematode polypeptide.

Another featured method is a method of screening for a compound that alters (increases or decreases) the binding of a PAN and ZP containing receptor-like polypeptide to a small molecule or protein substrate or alters the regulation of other polypeptides by the PANZP protein. The method includes providing the PANZP polypeptide; contacting a test compound to the PANZP polypeptide; and detecting an alteration of the binding activity or the activity of polypeptides regulated by the PANZP protein, wherein a change in binding activity of the PANZP polypeptides to its substrates or a change in the activity of other polypeptides downstream of the PANZP protein binding activity relative to the binding activity of the PANZP protein or the activity of downstream polypeptides in the absence of the test compound is an indication that the test compound alters the activity of the PANZP polypeptide(s). The method can further include contacting the test compound to a vertebrate PAN containing protein (e.g., human Factor XI) or a vertebrate ZP containing polypeptide (e.g., human uromodulin) and detecting binding of the compounds to the proteins and measuring the effects of the compounds on the activities of the vertebrate proteins. A test compound that alters the activity of the nematode PANZP polypeptide at a given concentration and that does not substantially alter the activity of the vertebrate PAN or ZP containing polypeptide or downstream polypeptides at the given concentration can be identified. An additional method includes screening for both binding to a PANZP polypeptide and for an alteration in the binding activity of a PANZP polypeptide. Yet another featured method is a method of screening for a compound that alters (increases or decreases) the viability or fitness of a transgenic cell or organism or nematode. The transgenic cell or organism has a transgene that expresses a PAN and ZP containing receptor-like polypeptide. The method includes contacting a test compound to the transgenic cell or

organism and detecting changes in the viability or fitness of the transgenic cell or organism. This alteration in viability or fitness can be measured relative to an otherwise identical cell or organism that does not harbor the transgene.

Also featured is a method of screening for a compound that alters the expression of a
5 nematode nucleic acid encoding a PAN and ZP containing receptor-like polypeptide, e.g., a nucleic acid encoding a *S. stercoralis*, *M. javanica*, *H. glycines* or *B. malayi* PANZP polypeptide. The method includes contacting a cell, e.g., a nematode cell, with a test compound and detecting expression of a nematode nucleic acid encoding a PANZP polypeptide, e.g., by hybridization to a probe complementary to the nematode nucleic acid
10 encoding a PANZP polypeptide or by contacting polypeptides isolated from the cell with a compound, e.g., antibody that binds a PANZP polypeptide. Compounds identified by the method are also within the scope of the invention.

In yet another aspect, the invention features a method of treating a disorder (e.g., an infection) caused by a nematode, e.g., *S. stercoralis*, *M. javanica*, *H. glycines* or *B. malayi* in
15 a subject, e.g., a host plant or host animal. The method includes administering to the subject an effective amount of an inhibitor of a PANZP polypeptide activity or an inhibitor of expression of a PANZP polypeptide. Non-limiting examples of such inhibitors include: an antisense nucleic acid (or PNA) to a PANZP nucleic acid, a double-stranded RNA inhibitor capable of triggering RNA interference, an antibody to a PANZP polypeptide, an inhibitory
20 peptide or protein, or a small molecule identified as a PANZP polypeptide inhibitor by a method described herein.

Also featured is a method of preventing or treating a disorder (e.g., an infection) caused by a nematode (e.g., *S. stercoralis* or *B. malayi*) in a host animal by vaccinating the animal with nematode PANZP protein or nucleic acid (e.g., a PANZP DNA vaccine) or both.
25 Also featured is a method of preventing infection of a plant host by a nematode (e.g., *M. javanica* or *H. glycines*) by expressing an antisense RNA or double-stranded RNA to the nematode PANZP nucleic acid or by expressing antibodies or other proteins which interfere with the function of the nematode PANZP protein.

In yet another aspect, the invention features methods for the production of nematode
30 resistant transgenic plants by obtaining specific antibodies to nematode PANZP proteins, deriving the nucleic acid sequences that code for these antibodies and expressing these

nucleic acids in plants under the control of appropriate promoters (e.g., constitutive or inducible, non-tissue specific, root specific, feeding site specific) and with other suitable control sequences (e.g., enhancers, introns, UTRs, terminators) to produce antibodies to the PANZP proteins in plants (plantibodies).

5 Also featured in this invention is a method of producing nematode resistant transgenic plants by the expression of nucleic acids coding for PANZP nematode proteins or portions of PANZP nematode proteins that can produce PANZP peptides or polypeptides capable of dominant negative interaction with endogenous nematode PAN and ZP containing receptor-like proteins upon ingestion by plant parasitic nematodes.

10 Also within the scope of this invention is the use of selection techniques like phage display or polysome display to generate peptides or proteins which bind to and inhibit the function of nematode PANZP proteins.

A “purified polypeptide”, as used herein, refers to a polypeptide that has been separated from other proteins, lipids, and nucleic acids with which it is naturally associated.
 15 The polypeptide can constitute at least 10, 20, 50 70, 80 or 95% by dry weight of the purified preparation.

An “isolated nucleic acid” is a nucleic acid, the structure of which is not identical to that of any naturally occurring nucleic acid, or to that of any fragment of a naturally occurring genomic nucleic acid spanning more than three separate genes. The term therefore
 20 covers, for example: (a) a DNA which is part of a naturally occurring genomic DNA molecule but is not flanked by both of the nucleic acid sequences that flank that part of the molecule in the genome of the organism in which it naturally occurs; (b) a nucleic acid incorporated into a vector or into the genomic DNA of a prokaryote or eukaryote in a manner such that the resulting molecule is not identical to any naturally occurring vector or genomic
 25 DNA; (c) a separate molecule such as a cDNA, a genomic fragment, a fragment produced by polymerase chain reaction (PCR), or a restriction fragment; and (d) a recombinant nucleotide sequence that is part of a hybrid gene, i.e., a gene encoding a fusion protein. Specifically excluded from this definition are nucleic acids present in mixtures of different (i) DNA molecules, (ii) transfected cells, or (iii) cell clones in a DNA library such as a cDNA or
 30 genomic DNA library. Isolated nucleic acid molecules according to the present invention

further include molecules produced synthetically, as well as any nucleic acids that have been altered chemically and/or that have modified backbones.

Although the phrase “nucleic acid molecule” primarily refers to the physical nucleic acid molecule and the phrase “nucleic acid sequence” refers to the sequence of the
 5 nucleotides in the nucleic acid molecule, the two phrases can be used interchangeably.

The term “substantially pure” as used herein in reference to a given polypeptide means that the polypeptide is substantially free from other biological macromolecules. The substantially pure polypeptide is at least 75% (e.g., at least 80, 85, 95, or 99%) pure by dry weight. Purity can be measured by any appropriate standard method, for example, by
 10 column chromatography, polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis, or HPLC analysis.

A percent identity for any subject nucleic acid or amino acid sequence (e.g., any of the PANZP polypeptides described herein) relative to another “target” nucleic acid or amino acid sequence can be determined as follows. First, a target nucleic acid or amino acid sequence of the invention can be compared and aligned to a subject nucleic acid or amino
 15 acid sequence, using the BLAST 2 Sequences (B12seq) program from the stand-alone version of BLASTZ containing BLASTN and BLASTP (e.g., version 2.0.14). The stand-alone version of BLASTZ can be obtained at or www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>. Instructions explaining how to use BLASTZ, and specifically the B12seq program, can be found in the ‘readme’ file accompanying BLASTZ. The programs also are described in detail by Karlin et al. (1990)
 20 *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci.* 87:2264; Karlin et al. (1990) *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci.* 90:5873; and Altschul et al. (1997) *Nucl. Acids Res.* 25:3389.

B12seq performs a comparison between the subject sequence and a target sequence using either the BLASTN (used to compare nucleic acid sequences) or BLASTP (used to compare amino acid sequences) algorithm. Typically, the default parameters of a
 25 BLOSUM62 scoring matrix, gap existence cost of 11 and extension cost of 1, a word size of 3, an expect value of 10, a per residue cost of 1 and a lambda ratio of 0.85 are used when performing amino acid sequence alignments. The output file contains aligned regions of homology between the target sequence and the subject sequence. Once aligned, a length is determined by counting the number of consecutive nucleotides or amino acid residues (i.e.,
 30 excluding gaps) from the target sequence that align with sequence from the subject sequence starting with any matched position and ending with any other matched position. A matched

position is any position where an identical nucleotide or amino acid residue is present in both the target and subject sequence. Gaps of one or more residues can be inserted into a target or subject sequence to maximize sequence alignments between structurally conserved domains (e.g., α -helices, β -sheets, and loops).

5 The percent identity over a particular length is determined by counting the number of matched positions over that particular length, dividing that number by the length and multiplying the resulting value by 100. For example, if (i) a 500 amino acid target sequence is compared to a subject amino acid sequence, (ii) the BL2seq program presents 200 amino acids from the target sequence aligned with a region of the subject sequence where the first
10 and last amino acids of that 200 amino acid region are matches, and (iii) the number of matches over those 200 aligned amino acids is 180, then the 500 amino acid target sequence contains a length of 200 and a sequence identity over that length of 90% (i.e., $180 \div 200 \times 100 = 90$).

 It will be appreciated that a nucleic acid or amino acid target sequence that aligns
15 with a subject sequence can result in many different lengths with each length having its own percent identity. It is noted that the percent identity value can be rounded to the nearest tenth. For example, 78.11, 78.12, 78.13, and 78.14 is rounded down to 78.1, while 78.15, 78.16, 78.17, 78.18, and 78.19 is rounded up to 78.2. It is also noted that the length value will always be an integer.

20 The identification of conserved regions in a template, or subject, polypeptide can facilitate homologous polypeptide sequence analysis. Conserved regions can be identified by locating a region within the primary amino acid sequence of a template polypeptide that is a repeated sequence, forms some secondary structure (e.g., helices and beta sheets), establishes positively or negatively charged domains, or represents a protein motif or domain. See, e.g.,
25 the Pfam web site describing consensus sequences for a variety of protein motifs and domains at <http://www.sanger.ac.uk/Pfam/> and <http://genome.wustl.edu/Pfam/>. A description of the information included at the Pfam database is described in Sonnhammer et al. (1998) *Nucl. Acids Res.* 26: 320-322; Sonnhammer et al. (1997) *Proteins* 28:405-420; and Bateman et al. (1999) *Nucl. Acids Res.* 27:260-262. From the Pfam database, consensus
30 sequences of protein motifs and domains can be aligned with the template polypeptide sequence to determine conserved region(s).

As used herein, the term “transgene” means a nucleic acid sequence (encoding, e.g., one or more subject polypeptides), which is partly or entirely heterologous, i.e., foreign, to the transgenic plant, animal, or cell into which it is introduced, or, is homologous to an endogenous gene of the transgenic plant, animal, or cell into which it is introduced, but which is designed to be inserted, or is inserted, into the plant's genome in such a way as to alter the genome of the cell into which it is inserted (e.g., it is inserted at a location which differs from that of the natural gene or its insertion results in a knockout). A transgene can include one or more transcriptional regulatory sequences and other nucleic acid sequences, such as introns, that may be necessary for optimal expression of the selected nucleic acid, all operably linked to the selected nucleic acid, and may include an enhancer sequence.

As used herein, the term “transgenic cell” refers to a cell containing a transgene.

As used herein, a “transgenic plant” is any plant in which one or more, or all, of the cells of the plant includes a transgene. The transgene can be introduced into the cell, directly or indirectly by introduction into a precursor of the cell, by way of deliberate genetic manipulation, such as by T-DNA mediated transfer, electroporation, or protoplast transformation. The transgene may be integrated within a chromosome, or it may be extrachromosomally replicating DNA.

As used herein, the term “tissue-specific promoter” means a DNA sequence that serves as a promoter, i.e., regulates expression of a selected DNA sequence operably linked to the promoter, and which affects expression of the selected DNA sequence in specific cells of a tissue, such as a leaf, root, or stem.

As used herein, the terms “hybridizes under stringent conditions” and “hybridizes under high stringency conditions” refer to conditions for hybridization in 6X sodium chloride/sodium citrate (SSC) buffer at about 45° C, followed by two washes in 0.2 X SSC buffer, 0.1% SDS at 60°C or 65°C. As used herein, the term “hybridizes under low stringency conditions” refers to conditions for hybridization in 6X SSC buffer at about 45°C, followed by two washes in 6X SSC buffer, 0.1% (w/v) SDS at 50°C.

A “heterologous promoter”, when operably linked to a nucleic acid sequence, refers to a promoter which is not naturally associated with the nucleic acid sequence.

As used herein, an agent with “anthelmintic activity” is an agent, which when tested, has measurable nematode-killing activity or results in infertility or sterility in the nematodes

such that unviable or no offspring result. In the assay, the agent is combined with nematodes, e.g., in a well of microtiter dish having agar media or in the soil containing the agent. Staged adult nematodes are placed on the media. The time of survival, viability or number of offspring, and/or the movement of the nematodes are measured. An agent with “anthelmintic activity” reduces the survival time of adult nematodes relative to unexposed
5 similarly staged adults, e.g., by about 20%, 40%, 60%, 80%, or more. In the alternative, an agent with “anthelmintic activity” may also cause the nematodes to cease replicating, regenerating, and/or producing viable progeny, e.g., by about 20%, 40%, 60%, 80%, or more.

As used herein, the term “binding” refers to the ability of a first compound and a
10 second compound that are not covalently linked to physically interact. The apparent dissociation constant for a binding event can be 1 mM or less, for example, 10 nM, 1 nM, 0.1 nM or less.

As used herein, the term “binds specifically” refers to the ability of an antibody to discriminate between a target ligand and a non-target ligand such that the antibody binds to
15 the target ligand and not to the non-target ligand when simultaneously exposed to both the given ligand and non-target ligand, and when the target ligand and the non-target ligand are both present in molar excess over the antibody.

As used herein, the term “altering an activity” refers to a change in level, either an increase or a decrease in the activity, (e.g., an increase or decrease in the ability of the
20 polypeptide to bind or regulate other polypeptides or molecules) particularly a PANZP activity. The change can be detected in a qualitative or quantitative observation. If a quantitative observation is made, and if a comprehensive analysis is performed over a plurality of observations, one skilled in the art can apply routine statistical analysis to identify modulations where a level is changed and where the statistical parameter, the *p*
25 value, is less than 0.05.

In part, the nematode PAN and ZP containing receptor-like proteins and nucleic acids described herein are novel targets for anti-nematode vaccines, pesticides, and drugs. These polypeptides are also useful for the creation of nematode resistant transgenic plants. Inhibition of these molecules can provide means of inhibiting nematode metabolism and/or
30 the nematode life-cycle.

The details of one or more embodiments of the invention are set forth in the accompanying drawings and the description below. Other features, objects, and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the description and drawings, and from the claims.

5

DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

FIGs. 1A-1C depict the cDNA sequence of a *S. stercoralis* PAN and ZP containing receptor-like protein 1 (PANZP1) (SEQ ID NO: 1), its corresponding encoded amino acid sequence (SEQ ID NO: 3), and its open reading frame (SEQ ID NO: 5).

FIGs. 2A-2B depict the cDNA sequence of a *S. stercoralis* PAN and ZP containing receptor-like protein 2 (PANZP2) (SEQ ID NO: 2), its corresponding encoded amino acid sequence (SEQ ID NO: 4), and its open reading frame (SEQ ID NO: 6).

FIGs. 3A-3C depict the cDNA sequence of a *M. javanica* PAN and ZP containing receptor-like protein 1 (PANZP1) (SEQ ID NO: 7), its corresponding encoded amino acid sequence (SEQ ID NO: 10), and its open reading frame (SEQ ID NO: 13).

FIG. 4 depicts the partial cDNA fragment of the sequence of a *H. glycines* PAN and ZP containing receptor-like protein 1 (PANZP1) (SEQ ID NO: 8), its corresponding encoded amino acid sequence (SEQ ID NO: 11), and its open reading frame (SEQ ID NO: 14).

FIGs. 5A-5B depict the partial cDNA fragment of a sequence of a *B. malayi* PAN and ZP containing receptor-like protein 1 (PANZP1) (SEQ ID NO: 9), its corresponding encoded amino acid sequence (SEQ ID NO: 12), and its open reading frame (SEQ ID NO: 15).

FIG. 6 depicts an alignment showing schematic depictions of a number of PAN and ZP domain containing proteins including: *D. melanogaster* GenBank® Accession No. NP_524831, *C. elegans* GenBank® Accession No. NP_505875, *C. elegans* GenBank® Accession No. NP_502253, *C. elegans* GenBank® Accession No. NP_505874, *C. elegans* GenBank® Accession No. NP_502699, *C. elegans* GenBank® Accession No. NP_501670, *C. elegans* GenBank® Accession No. NP_502252, *C. elegans* GenBank® Accession No. NP_491706, *C. elegans* GenBank® Accession No. AAB52479, *D. melanogaster* GenBank® Accession No. AAK09434.

FIG. 7 is an alignment of the sequences of *S. stercoralis*, *M. javanica*, *H. glycines* and *B. malayi* PAN and ZP containing receptor-like polypeptide proteins and fragments

(PANZP1; SEQ ID NO: 3, 10, 11, 12), *C. elegans* PANZP1 polypeptides (SEQ ID NO: 16 and 17) and *C. briggsae* PANZP1 polypeptide (SEQ ID NO: 45) .

FIG. 8 is an alignment of the sequences of *S. stercoralis* PAN and ZP containing receptor-like polypeptide protein 2 (PANZP2; SEQ ID NO: 4), *C. elegans* PANZP2
 5 polypeptide (SEQ ID NO: 18) and *C. briggsae* PANZP2 (SEQ ID NO: 46).

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

An important step toward the development of new anthelmintic agents is the
 10 identification of nematode-specific gene products that can serve as targets for inhibitory peptides and proteins (e.g., antibodies) and antiparasitic chemicals. An ideal target gene would be essential for nematode viability, such that interference with the target would result in the arrest of parasite growth and reproduction. In addition, the protein product of the target gene should be accessible to drugs, small chemicals or antibodies. Finally, the ideal
 15 target should be specific to nematodes and not closely related to any gene in plants or animals. Based on these criteria, we have identified two *C. elegans* genes, PANZP1 (C34G6.6) and PANZP2 (F52B11.3), as important targets for the development of vaccines, small molecule anthelmintic chemicals for both human and animal parasites and nematicides for plant parasitic nematode control. In addition, inhibitors of PANZP1 and PANZP2 could
 20 be used in the design of transgenic plants producing anti-nematode peptides, small natural products with nematicidal activity, and antibodies (plantibodies) directed against endogenous nematode targets.

PANZP1 and PANZP2 are predicted to be secreted, membrane-bound proteins. Close homologs of the *C. elegans* PANZP1 genes were identified in an intestinal library from
 25 *Ascaris suum*, suggesting that these genes are expressed in the nematode gastrointestinal system. The presence of C-terminal transmembrane domains suggests that the proteins are anchored in the membrane. Domain analysis of the PANZP1 and PANZP2 sequences using TargetP (a secretion prediction tool available on the internet at cbs.dtu.dk/services/TargetP/), PFAM (a domain analysis tool available on the internet at pfam.wustl.edu/) and TMHMM (a
 30 transmembrane domain prediction tool available on the internet at cbs.dtu.dk/services/TMHMM/) indicates the presence of a secretion leader, several

Plasminogen Apple Nematode (PAN) domains and a single C-terminal Zona Pellucida (ZP) domain before the transmembrane helix which is followed by a short C-terminal tail. The domain architecture of PANZP1 and PANZP2 is illustrated at the top of FIG. 6 along with the domain structure of a number of *C. elegans* and *D. melanogaster* PAN and ZP domain-

5 containing proteins. The *C. elegans* genome contains several predicted proteins with a similar modular arrangement to PANZP1 and PANZP2. Of these, two (C34G6.6a and C34G6.6b) appear to be isoforms of the same gene (C34G6.6[p] is an older gene prediction), but the others appear to represent unique loci. Additionally, homologs containing the same domain layout are found in *Drosophila melanogaster* and the *Anopheles gambiae* genomes.

10 PAN domains and the related PAN_{AP} domains are typically 80-90 amino acids in length and are defined by a characteristic pattern of six cysteine residues and conserved hydrophobic residues. The cysteine residues form three highly conserved disulfide bonds linking the first and sixth, second and fifth, and third and fourth cysteine residues present in each repeat (McMullen et al. (1991) *Biochemistry*, 30(8):2050-2056; Brown et al. (2001) *FEBS Lett.* 497(1)31-38). The conserved disulfide linkages give the PAN domains a

15 characteristic apple-like globular structure. PAN domains were originally referred to as “Apple” domains based on this characteristic structure.

PAN and PAN_{AP} domains have been extensively studied in the mammalian blood coagulation proteins Factor XI (FXI), plasma pre-kallikrein (PK), and plasminogen. The

20 specific involvement of the apple (or PAN) domains in protein-protein interactions that mediate blood clotting has been demonstrated (Baglia et al. (1995) *J. Biol. Chem.* 270(12):6734-6740; Sun & Gailani (1996) *J. Biol. Chem.* 271(46):29023-29028; Ho et al. (2000) *Biochemistry*, 39(2):316-323; Renne et al. (2002) *J. Biol. Chem.* 277(7):4892-4899). PAN domains are also thought to mediate protein-protein or protein-carbohydrate

25 interactions in adhesive proteins that are secreted by apicomplexan parasites, single-celled eukaryotic organisms that invade target host cells in order to replicate. PAN domain-containing proteins are secreted by these organisms and are thought to play a role in the recognition and attachment of the parasite to host cells (Brown et al. (2001) *FEBS Lett.* 497(1)31-38; Brecht et al. (2001) *J. Biol. Chem.* 276(6):4119-4127).

30 The *C. elegans* genome contains at least 20 predicted proteins that contain one or more PAN domains. Although the level of sequence percent identity is low among the PAN

domain family members, the pattern of conserved cysteines and hydrophobic residues establishes the three dimensional structure that is characteristic of the domain (Tordai et al. (1999) *FEBS Lett.* 461(1-2):63-67). The possibility for a high degree of sequence diversity within the family enables the domain to mediate a large number of protein-protein interactions.

In addition to N-terminal PAN domains, PANZP1 and PANZP2 contain a C-terminal ZP (zona pellucida) domain. Many eukaryotic proteins contain ZP domains, including the mammalian sperm cell receptors ZP2 and ZP3 and other large modular transmembrane proteins such as the major urinary protein uromodulin (Tamm-Horsfall protein or THP), human alpha-tectorin, and *Drosophila nompA*. In all examples found to date, the ZP domain occurs at the C-terminus of the protein.

The ZP domain occurs in proteins that are known to polymerize to form filaments and matrices. For example, THP, the most abundant urinary protein, is a secreted protein that polymerizes into filaments that are thought to be responsible for the water-impermeability of the thick ascending limb of the loop of Henle (Kokot & Dulawa (2000) *Nephron*, 85(2):97-102). Mammalian sperm receptors ZP2 and ZP3 are secreted by oocytes and polymerize to form the thick extracellular matrix, the zona pellucida, which surrounds oocytes. Another ZP domain-containing protein, alpha-tectorin, is the primary non-collagenous component of the cochlear tectorial membrane, an extracellular matrix that is important in the transduction of sound into neuronal impulses. The requirement of the ZP domain for the assembly of THP and for ZP2 and ZP3 proteins into supramolecular filaments was recently demonstrated (Jovine et al. (2002) *Nat. Cell. Biol.* 4(6):457-461).

The *Drosophila nompA* gene has a similar domain arrangement to PANZP1 and PANZP2, and while overall sequence percent identity between the insect and nematode proteins is low, the *nompA* protein (along with Sp71) is one of the most closely related non-nematode sequences by BLAST analysis to (the *C. elegans* PAN-ZP containing proteins). Like PANZP1 and PANZP2, the *Drosophila nompA* (no-mechanoreceptor potential A) is a transmembrane protein with a large, modular extracellular segment that includes the PAN and ZP domains. *NompA* is localized in an extracellular matrix that is responsible for the transduction of mechanical stimuli to sensory processes in the peripheral nervous system (Chung et al. (2001) *Neuron* 29(2):415-428). Mutations in the no-mechanoreceptor-potential

A (*nompA*) gene eliminate transduction in *Drosophila* mechanosensory organs by disrupting contacts between neuronal sensory endings and cuticular structures.

PANZP1 and PANZP2 are essential for nematode viability. RNAi-generated mutations of PANZP1 and PANZP2 result in larval arrest at the L2 stage. A related *C. elegans* PAN-domain containing protein, LET-653 (C29E6.1) has also been shown to be an essential gene (Clark & Baille (1992) *Mol. Gen. Genet.* 232(1):97-105). Mutations in the *let-653* gene are lethal and are associated with the appearance of large vacuoles that suggest a dysfunction of the secretory/excretory apparatus (Jones & Baille (1995) *Mol. Gen. Genet.* 248(6):719-726). LET-653 has two N-terminal PAN domains and a weakly predicted C-terminal ZP domain that contains a region of low-complexity sequence. The function of LET-653 is unknown, but it has been speculated that it may be functionally similar to the mammalian ZP-domain containing GP2 protein (Tordai et al. (1999) *FEBS Lett.* 461(1-2):63-67; Wong & Lowe, (1996) *Gene*, 171(2):311-312). GP2 plays an important role in the secretion of pancreatic digestive enzymes. GP2 is the major glycoprotein component of the zymogen granule membrane. Proteolytic processing of GP2 and its release from the zymogen granule membrane occur as part of the normal process of zymogen granule secretion in the pancreas (Fritz et al. (2002) *Pancreas*, 24(4):336-343).

Proteins such as PANZP1 and PANZP2 that are localized in the nematode gut are especially attractive targets for the development of vaccines. Although gut-localized proteins are accessible to antibodies, they are normally inaccessible to host immune surveillance that is required to mount an immune response. Nevertheless, these so-called "hidden antigens", when purified, can be used to stimulate highly effective antibody responses in animals, especially against blood-feeding nematodes (Munn (1997) *Int. J. Parasit.* 27(4):359-366); Newton & Munn (1999) *Parasitology Today*, 15:116-122).

The structural features of the PANZP1 and PANZP2 suggest possible strategies for the production of antibodies and for the rational design of peptide inhibitors that could interfere with the protein-protein interactions mediated by the PAN and ZP domain portions of the molecule. It has been shown in studies with blood coagulation factors that antibodies and peptides that compete for binding to PAN domains disrupt the normal protein-protein interactions, and prevent blood coagulation (Baglia et al. (1995) *J. Biol. Chem.* 270(12):6734-6740; Sun & Gailani (1996) *J. Biol. Chem.* 271(46):29023-29028; Renne et al.

(2002) *J. Biol. Chem.* 277(7):4892-4899). Recombinant proteins containing the PAN domain only have been shown to assume the proper conformation, suggesting that it would be possible to purify amounts of PAN domains that could be used for the production of antibodies (Baglia & Walsh (1996) *J. Biol. Chem.* 271(7): 3652-3658; Baglia et al. (2000) *J. Biol. Chem.* 275(41):31954-31962). It has also been demonstrated that synthetic peptides that are designed from conformationally constrained portions of the PAN domain sequence (i.e., peptides which have at least one of the conserved disulfide linkages) are effective inhibitors of the normal protein-protein interaction carried out by the whole protein. Nematode resistant transgenic plants may be created by the production of plantibodies capable of interfering with the function of PANZP1 or PANZP2 or the expression in plants of peptides or individual PAN or ZP domains that can interfere with the normal functioning of nematode PANZP1 or PANZP2 in dominant negative fashion. The small size of peptides or individual domains may be an advantage for applications against certain plant parasitic nematodes, which appear to have size exclusion constraints for oral uptake.

The present invention provides nucleic acid sequences from nematodes encoding PAN and ZP containing receptor-like polypeptides. The *S. stercoralis* nucleic acid molecule (SEQ ID NO: 1) and the encoded PANZP1 (SEQ ID NO: 3) are depicted in FIGs. 1A-1C. The *S. stercoralis* nucleic acid molecule (SEQ ID NO: 2) and the encoded PANZP2 (SEQ ID NO: 4) are depicted in FIGs. 2A-2B. The *M. javanica* nucleic acid molecule (SEQ ID NO: 7) and the encoded PANZP1 (SEQ ID NO: 10) are depicted in FIGs. 3A-3C. The partial *H. glycines* nucleic acid molecule (SEQ ID NO: 8) and the encoded PANZP1 (SEQ ID NO: 11) are depicted in FIG. 4. The partial *B. malayi* nucleic acid molecule (SEQ ID NO: 9) and the encoded PANZP1 (SEQ ID NO: 12) are depicted in FIGs. 5A-5B. Certain sequence information for the PANZP1 and PANZP2 genes described herein is summarized in Table 1, below.

Table 1

Species	CDNA	ORF	Polypeptide	Figure
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<i>S. stercoralis</i>	SEQ ID NO:1	SEQ ID NO:5	SEQ ID NO:3	Figs. 1A-1C
<i>S. stercoralis</i>	SEQ ID NO: 2	SEQ ID NO: 6	SEQ ID NO: 4	Figs. 2A-2B
<i>M. javanica</i>	SEQ ID NO:7	SEQ ID NO:13	SEQ ID NO:10	Figs. 3A-3C
<i>H. glycines</i>	SEQ ID NO:8	SEQ ID NO:14	SEQ ID NO:11	Fig. 4
<i>B. malayi</i>	SEQ ID NO:9	SEQ ID NO:15	SEQ ID NO:12	Figs. 5A-5B

The invention is based, in part, on the discovery of PANZP sequences from *S. stercoralis*, *M. javanica*, *H. glycines*, and *B. malayi*. The following examples are, therefore, to be construed as merely illustrative, and not limitative of the remainder of the disclosure in any way whatsoever. All of the publications cited herein are hereby incorporated by reference in their entirety.

EXAMPLES

10 A TBLASTN query with the *C. elegans* genes C34G6.6 (gi|17505859|ref|NP_491706.1|; PANZP1) and F52B11.3 (gi|17540572|ref|NP_502699.1|; PANZP2) identified multiple expressed sequence tags (ESTs are short nucleic acid fragment sequences from single sequencing reads) in **dbest** that are predicted to encode a portion of PANZP enzymes in multiple nematode species.

15 PANZP ESTs identified as similar to *C. elegans* C34G6.6 (*C. elegans* PANZP1) include but are not limited to *Brugia malayi* (gi|2199168|gb|AA471404.1|AA471404); *Pristionchus pacificus* (gi|15339536|gb|BI500192.1|BI500192); *Strongyloides stercoralis* (gi|9830619|gb|BE579677.1|BE579677); *Ascaris summ* (gi|15785830|gb|BI782938.1|BI782938); *Meloidogyne javanica* (gi|15766417|gb|BI744615.1|BI744615); *Strongyloides ratti* (gi|14494496|gb|BI073876.1|BI073876); and *Haemonchus contortus* (gi|10818965|gb|BF060055.1|BF060055).

20 PANZP ESTs identified as similar to *C. elegans* F52B11.3 (*C. elegans* PANZP2) include but are not limited to *Strongyloides ratti* (gi|14288440|gb|BG893830.1|BG893830); *Strongyloides stercoralis* (gi|9831122|gb|BE580180.1|BE580180); *Meloidogyne hapla* (gi|19435833|gb|BM952243.1|BM952243); *Brugia malayi*

(gi|2605443|gb|AA661399.1|AA661399); and *Onchocerca volvulus* (gi|14624150|gb|BI142440.1|BI142440).

Full-length PAN and ZP containing receptor-like cDNA sequences

5 Plasmid clone, Div3206, corresponding to the *S. stercoralis* EST sequence (GenBank® Identification No: 9831352) was obtained from the Genome Sequencing Center (St. Louis, MO). The cDNA insert in the plasmid was sequenced in its entirety. Unless otherwise indicated, all nucleotide sequences determined herein were sequenced with an automated DNA sequencer (such as model 373 from Applied Biosystems, Inc.) using
10 processes well-known to those skilled in the art. Primers used for sequencing are listed in Table 2 (see below). Partial sequence data for the *S. stercoralis* PANZP1 was obtained from Div3206, including nucleotide sequence for codons 141-1122 and additional 3' untranslated sequence. To obtain the missing 5'-sequence of the *S. stercoralis* PANZP1 gene, the 5'-oligo-capped RACE method (GeneRacer™ kit from Invitrogen Life Technologies) was
15 applied. This technique results in the selective ligation of an RNA oligonucleotide (SEQ ID NO: 22) to the 5'-ends of decapped mRNA using T4 RNA ligase. First strand cDNA synthesis from total *S. stercoralis* oligo-capped RNA was performed using an internal gene specific primer (PN1ss-5; SEQ ID NO: 23), designed from the known sequence, that anneals within the cDNA molecule of interest. The first strand cDNA was then directly PCR
20 amplified using a nested gene specific primer (PN1ss-2; SEQ ID NO: 24) designed from known sequence that anneals within the cDNA molecule of interest, and the GeneRacer™ 5' nested oligo (SEQ ID NO: 26), which is homologous to the 5'-end of all cDNAs amplified with the GeneRacer™ oligo-capped RNA method. This procedure was performed to generate clone Div3577, which contains codons 1-184 in addition to 5'-untranslated
25 sequences. Taken together, clones Div3206 and Div3577 contain sequences comprising the complete open reading frame of the PANZP1 gene of *S. stercoralis*.

 Plasmid clone, Div3172, corresponding to the *S. stercoralis* EST sequence (GenBank® Identification No: 9830179) was obtained from the Genome Sequencing Center (St. Louis, MO). The cDNA insert in the plasmid was sequenced in its entirety. Primers
30 used for sequencing are listed in Table 2. Full sequence data for the *S. stercoralis* PANZP2 was obtained from Div3172, including nucleotide sequence for codons 1-557 and additional

5'- and 3'-untranslated sequences. Div3172 contains the complete open reading frame of the PANZP2 gene of *S. stercoralis*.

Plasmid clone, Div2577, corresponding to the *M. javanica* EST sequence (GenBank® Identification No: 15766417) was obtained from the Genome Sequencing Center (St. Louis, MO). The cDNA insert in the plasmid was sequenced in its entirety. Partial sequence data for the *M. javanica* PANZP1 was obtained from Div2577, including nucleotide sequence for codons 100-233. The available sequence lacked the first 99 codons and the last 977 codons of the *M. javanica* PANZP1, as well as 5' and 3' untranslated regions. To obtain the middle region of the *M. javanica* PANZP1 gene, the 3' RACE technique was applied. First strand cDNA synthesis from total *M. javanica* RNA was performed using an oligo dT primer (SEQ ID NO: 21). The cDNA was then directly PCR amplified using a gene specific primer (PAN18; SEQ ID NO: 37) designed from the known sequence that anneals within the cDNA molecule of interest, and a degenerate primer (PAN25; SEQ ID NO: 38) designed to anneal to region of the gene predicted to exhibit strong homology shared across many nematode PANZP1 genes. This procedure was performed to generate clone Div3651, which contains codons 164-913.

To obtain the missing 5' end of the *M. javanica* PANZP1 gene, the 5' RACE technique was applied. First strand cDNA synthesis from total *M. javanica* RNA was performed using a gene specific primer (Mj-P1-R2; SEQ ID NO: 40). Single stranded cDNA was then dC-tailed and PCR amplified using a gene specific primer (Mj-P1-R3; SEQ ID NO: 41) and the AAP (abridged anchor primer) (SEQ ID NO: 50). A final nested PCR was performed using gene specific primer Mj-P1-R4 (SEQ ID NO: 42) and AUAP (abridged universal primer) (SEQ ID NO: 19). This procedure was performed to generate clone Div4453, which contains codons 1-118.

To obtain the 3' end of the *M. javanica* PANZP1 gene, the 3' RACE technique was applied. First strand cDNA synthesis from *M. javanica* RNA was performed as described previously. The first strand cDNA was directly PCR amplified using a gene specific primer (P1-Mj-F2; SEQ ID NO: 39) designed from the known sequence that anneals within the first strand cDNA molecule of interest, and the AUAP primer (SEQ ID NO: 19), which is homologous to the 3' end of the cDNA of interest. This procedure was performed to generate clone Div4470, which contains codons 846-1210 in addition to 3' untranslated

sequences. Taken together, clones Div2577, Div3651, Div4453, and Div4470 contain sequences comprising the complete open reading frame of the PANZP1 gene of *M. javanica*.

Partial-length PAN and ZP containing receptor-like cDNA sequences

5 In an attempt to obtain the *H. glycines* PANZP1 gene, first strand cDNA derived from total *H. glycines* RNA by reverse transcription with the Oligo dT primer, was directly PCR amplified, using a degenerate primer (P1-10FA; SEQ ID NO: 43) designed to anneal to a region of strong homology shared across many nematode PANZP1 genes, and another degenerate primer (P1-02R; SEQ ID NO: 44). This procedure was performed to obtain clone
10 Div4504, which contains codons 1-252. The *H. glycines* PANZP1 gene fragment within plasmid Div4504 is missing the 5' and 3' coding sequences. The encoded codons are arbitrarily numbered starting with number 1 for convenience. The codons contained in the *H. glycines* PANZP1 gene fragment correspond to codons 112-364 of the *C. elegans* PANZP1 gene.

15 Partial sequence data for the *B. malayi* PANZP1 was obtained from a *B. malayi* EST (GenBank® Identification No: 2199168), including nucleotide sequence for codons 207-363. The available sequence lacked the first 206 codons and, approximately, the last 700 codons of the *B. malayi* PANZP1, as well as the 5' and 3' untranslated regions. Partial sequence data for the *B. malayi* PANZP1 was also obtained from the *B. malayi* EST (GenBank®
20 Identification No: 5342885), including nucleotide sequence for codons 256-386. The available sequence lacked the first 255 codons and, approximately, the last 680 codons of the *B. malayi* PANZP1, as well as the 5' and 3' untranslated regions.

To obtain the middle region of the *B. malayi* PANZP1 gene, the 3' RACE technique was applied. First strand cDNA synthesis from total *B. malayi* RNA was performed using an
25 oligo dT primer (SEQ ID NO: 21). The cDNA was then directly PCR amplified using a gene specific primer (PNbm-3; SEQ ID NO: 36) designed from the known sequence that anneals within the cDNA molecule of interest, and a degenerate primer (PAN20; SEQ ID NO: 35) designed to anneal to region of strong homology shared across many nematode PANZP1 genes. This procedure was performed to generate clone Div3410, which contains codons
30 162-340. To obtain the 5' sequence of the *B. malayi* PANZP1 gene, the 5'-oligo-capped RACE method (GeneRacer™ kit from Invitrogen Life Technologies) was applied. This

technique results in the selective ligation of an RNA oligonucleotide (SEQ ID NO: 22) to the 5'-ends of decapped mRNA using T4 RNA ligase. First strand cDNA synthesis from total *B. malayi* oligo-capped RNA was performed using an internal gene specific primer (PNbm-GR; SEQ ID NO: 31), designed from the known sequence, that anneals within the cDNA molecule of interest. The first strand cDNA was then directly PCR amplified using a nested gene specific primer (PN1bm-GR-nest; SEQ ID NO: 32) designed from known sequence that anneals within the cDNA molecule of interest, and the GeneRacer™ 5' nested oligo (SEQ ID NO: 26), which is homologous to the 5'-end of all cDNAs amplified with the GeneRacer™ oligo-capped RNA method. This procedure was performed to generate clone Div3663, which contains codons 1-232, in addition to 5'-untranslated sequences. To obtain more of the 3' sequence of the *B. malayi* PANZP1 gene, the 3' RACE technique was applied. First strand cDNA synthesis from total *B. malayi* RNA was performed using an oligo dT primer (SEQ ID NO: 21). The cDNA was then directly PCR amplified using a gene specific primer (PNbm-5; SEQ ID NO: 33) designed from the known sequence that anneals within the cDNA molecule of interest, and a degenerate primer (PAN23; SEQ ID NO: 34) designed to anneal to region of strong homology shared across many nematode PANZP1 genes. This procedure was performed to generate clone Div3643, which contains codons 305-881. Taken together, clones Div3410, Div3663, and Div3643 contain sequences comprising approximately 75% of the complete *B. malayi* PANZP1 open reading frame. The 3' end sequence has yet to be completed.

Table 2

Name	Sequence	SEQ ID NO	Homology to
AUAP	ggccacgcgtcgactagtagtac	19	abridged universal primer (homologous to the 5' ends of primers Oligo dT and AAP)
SL1	gggtttaattaccaagtttga	20	nematode transplliced leader
Oligo dT	ggccacgcgtcgactagtagtactttttttttttttt	21	universal primer to poly A tail
RNA oligo	cgacuggagcacgaggacacugacauggacugaaggaguagaaa	22	GeneRacer™ RNA oligo
PN1ss-5	ccgtccaagaggcttgaac	23	<i>Ss</i> PANZP1 (codons 274-279)
PN1ss-2	gatctggtcgatcaagtc	24	<i>Ss</i> PANZP1 (codons 180-184)
GR5	cgactggagcacgaggacactga	25	GeneRacer™ 5' primer

GR5n	ggacactgacatggactgaaggagta	26	GeneRacer™ 5' nested primer
AN07.C09	tcagtgcggtatgtcctcc	27	<i>Ce</i> PANZP1 genomic
AN07.D09	tgacagatggaacattctcc	28	<i>Ce</i> PANZP1 genomic
AN08.A10	acttcaggacacgacttgac	29	<i>Ce</i> PANZP2 genomic
AN08.B10	caatcagagatggttaactcc	30	<i>Ce</i> PANZP2 genomic
PNbm-GR	cgtttagacagtcgctgagtacata	31	<i>Bm</i> PANZP1 (codons 247-254)
PN1bm-GR-n	ccaactcgtagctagctgacg	32	<i>Bm</i> PANZP1 (codons 226-232)
PNbm-5	cgaacatgtcgcaatgtac	33	<i>Bm</i> PANZP1 (codons 305-310)
PAN23	catngccatdatytccca	34	PANZP1 degenerate (codons 876-881)
PAN20	ttyggnttygartgygar	35	PANZP1 degenerate (codons 162-167)
PNbm-3	gatcgaggcacatcggtac	36	<i>Bm</i> PANZP1 (codons 335-340)
PAN18	gtttagatgctgttgatac	37	<i>Mj</i> PANZP1 (codons 164-168)
PAN25	tcdatyttnccyctnggytg	38	<i>Mj</i> PANZP1 degenerate (codons 908-913)
P1-Mj-F2	caagatatggacaatggaac	39	<i>Mj</i> PANZP1 (codons 846-851)
Mj-P1-R2	atacattcgcatccaatgg	40	<i>Mj</i> PANZP1 (codons 181-186)
Mj-P1-R3	actgactcgcatcacaagcc	41	<i>Mj</i> PANZP1 (codons 171-176)
Mj-P1-R4	tagctaactagctagtgtc	42	<i>Mj</i> PANZP1 (codons 113-118)
P1-10FA	garcaraaratgctngt	43	<i>Hg</i> PANZP1 (codons 1-6)
P1-02R	tgytcrtrtartaatcat	44	<i>Hg</i> PANZP1 (codons 247-252)
T7	gtaatacgactcactatagggc	47	vector polylinker primer
T3	aattaaccctcactaaaggg	48	vector polylinker primer
SP6	gatttaggtgacactatag	49	vector polylinker primer
AAP	ggccacgcgtcgactagtagggggggg	50	abridged anchor primer

Characterization of nematode PAN and ZP containing receptor-like proteins

The sequences of the two PANZP-like nucleic acid molecules (PANZP1 and PANZP2 from *S. stercoralis*, respectively) are depicted in FIGs. 1A-1C and FIGs. 2A-2B as

5 SEQ ID NO: 1 and SEQ ID NO: 2. The open reading frame of SEQ ID NO: 1 (SEQ ID NO: 5) contains an open reading frame encoding a 1122 amino acid polypeptide (SEQ ID NO:3).

The open reading frame of SEQ ID NO: 2 (SEQ ID NO: 6) contains an open reading frame encoding a 557 amino acid polypeptide (SEQ ID NO: 4).

The *S. stercoralis* PANZP1 protein (FIGs. 1A-1C; SEQ ID NO: 3) is approximately 54% identical (in the region of shared homology) to the *C. elegans* PANZP1 proteins (FIG. 4; SEQ ID NOs: 7 and 8). The similarity between the PANZP1 proteins from *S. stercoralis* and from *C. elegans* is presented as a multiple alignment generated by the ClustalX multiple alignment program as described below (FIG. 7).

The *S. stercoralis* PANZP2 protein (FIGs. 2A-2B; SEQ ID NO: 4) is approximately 79% identical (in the region of shared homology) to the *C. elegans* PANZP2 protein (FIGs. 5A-5B; SEQ ID NO: 9). The similarity between the PANZP2 proteins from *S. stercoralis* and from *C. elegans* is presented as a multiple alignment generated by the ClustalX multiple alignment program as described below (FIG. 8).

The sequences of PANZP1-like nucleic acid molecules from *M. javanica*, *H. glycines*, and *B. malayi* are depicted in FIGs. 3A-3C, 4, and 5 as SEQ ID NO: 7, 8, and 9 respectively.. The open reading frames within SEQ ID NO: 7-9 are shown as SEQ ID NO: 13-15 respectively. The *M. javanica* PANZP1-like sequence encodes a predicted polypeptide of 1210 amino acids (SEQ ID NO: 10). The partial *H. glycines* PANZP1-like sequence encodes a predicted polypeptide of 250 amino acids (SEQ ID NO: 11). The partial *B. malayi* PANZP1-like sequence encodes a predicted polypeptide of 881 amino acids (SEQ ID NO: 12).

The *M. javanica* PANZP1 protein (FIGs. 3A-3C; SEQ ID NO: 10) is approximately 46% identical (in the region of shared homology) to the *C. elegans* PANZP1 proteins (FIG. 7; SEQ ID NO: 17). The similarity between the PANZP1 proteins from *M. javanica* and from *C. elegans* is presented as a multiple alignment generated by the ClustalX multiple alignment program as described below (FIG. 7).

The *H. glycines* PANZP1 protein (FIG. 4; SEQ ID NO: 11) is approximately 65% identical (in the region of shared homology) to the *C. elegans* PANZP1 proteins (FIG. 7; SEQ ID NO: 17). The similarity between the PANZP1 proteins from *H. glycines* and from *C. elegans* is presented as a multiple alignment generated by the ClustalX multiple alignment program as described below (FIG. 7).

The *B. malayi* PANZP1 protein (FIGs. 5A-5B: SEQ ID NO: 12) is approximately 56% identical (in the region of shared homology) to the *C. elegans* PANZP1 proteins (FIG. 7; SEQ ID NO: 17). The similarity between the PANZP1 proteins from *B. malayi* and from *C. elegans* is presented as a multiple alignment generated by the ClustalX multiple alignment program as described below (FIG. 7).

Hidden Markov Model based domain analysis of the nematode PAN and ZP containing receptor-like proteins using the PFAM database (available on the internet at pfam.wustl.edu) shows that the nematode PANZP1 proteins contain six PAN domains and a single ZP domain. Different PANZP proteins have different numbers of PAN domains (e.g., *C. elegans* PANZP2 has four PAN domains) but the overall module arrangement is the same (i.e., secretion leader, (PAN)_x, ZP, T_M). In PANZP1 the seven domains are referred to as PAN1, PAN2, PAN3, PAN4, PAN5, PAN6 and ZP. The predicted amino acid positions of these domains in the PANZP proteins are listed in the table below.

Table 3: Amino Acid positions of conserved PAN and ZP motifs in Nematode PANZP proteins

Nematode	PAN1	PAN2	PAN3	PAN4	PAN5	PAN6	ZP
<i>S. stercoralis</i> PANZP1 (SEQ ID NO:3)	32-108	115-201	206-295	302-392	399-485	508-580	708-999
<i>M. javanica</i> PANZP1 (SEQ ID NO:10)	36-122	129-215	220-309	316-406	413-499	520-603	731-1045
<i>H. glycines</i> PANZP1 (SEQ ID NO:11)		1-77	106-196	198-250			
<i>B. malayi</i> PANZP1 (SEQ ID NO:12)	40-114	121-207	212-300	307-397	404-490	497-575	

NO:12)							
<i>C. elegans</i> _a PANZP1	25-97	104-190	212-300	307-397	404-491	504-576	652-953
<i>C. elegans</i> _b PANZP1	25-97	104-190	212-300	307-397	404-491	508-580	656-957
<i>C. briggsae</i> PANZP1	25-97	104-190	211-299	306-396	403-490	507-579	655-956
<i>S. stercoralis</i> PANZP2 (SEQ ID NO:4)	23-114	124-207	215-298	308-385			384-442
<i>C. elegans</i> PANZP2	21-112	122-204	212-295	305-382			391-632
<i>C. briggsae</i> PANZP2	22-113	123-205	213-296	306-383			392-633

The similarity between *S. stercoralis*, *M. javanica*, *H. glycines*, and *B. malayi* PANZP sequences and other sequences was also investigated by comparison to sequence databases using BLASTP analysis against **nr** (a non-redundant protein sequence database available on the internet at ncbi.nlm.nih.gov) and TBLASTN analysis against **dbest** (an EST sequence database available on the internet at ncbi.nlm.nih.gov; top 500 hits; E = 1e-4). The “Expect (E) value” is the number of sequences that are predicted to align by chance to the query sequence with a score S or greater given the size of the database queried. This analysis was used to determine the potential number of plant and vertebrate homologs for each of the nematode PANZP polypeptides described above. None of the PANZP sequences described above had high scoring vertebrate hits in **nr** or **dbest** having sufficient sequence similarity to meet the threshold E value of 1e-4 (this E value approximately corresponds to a threshold for removing sequences having a sequence identity of less than about 25% over approximately 100 amino acids). Accordingly, the PANZP enzymes of this invention do not appear to share significant sequence similarity with common vertebrate PAN containing proteins such as the *Homo sapiens* Plasminogen (gi|4505881|ref|NP_000292.1|) or ZP containing proteins such as the *Homo sapiens* Zona Pellucida 2 glycoprotein (gi|4508045|ref|NP_003451.1|).

On the basis of the lack of similarity to vertebrate PAN or ZP containing proteins and the lack of significant plant homologs, the PANZP enzymes are useful targets of inhibitory

(small molecule, peptide or protein) compounds selective for nematodes over their hosts (e.g., humans, animals, and plants).

Functional predictions were made using BLAST with the default parameters on the **nr** database. BLAST searches and multiple alignment construction with CLUSTALX demonstrated that the *C. elegans* genes C34G6.6a, C34G6.6b and F52B11.3 define a family of PAN and ZP containing proteins found in nematodes and arthropods (e.g., *Anopheles gambiae*, *C. briggsae* and *Drosophila melanogaster*). Reciprocal blast searches and phylogenetic trees confirm that the nucleotide sequences from *S. stercoralis*, *M. javanica*, *H. glycines*, and *B. malayi* are orthologs of the *C. elegans* and *C. briggsae* genes and are therefore members of the same PANZP family of proteins. Protein localizations were predicted using the TargetP server (available on the internet at cbs.dtu.dk/services/TargetP) and transmembrane domains with the TMHMM server (available on the internet at cbs.dtu.dk/services/TMHMM). The nematode PANZP polypeptides (SEQ ID NO: 3, 4, 10, 11, and 12), like the *C. elegans* and *C. briggsae* proteins (SEQ ID NO: 7, 8, 9, 45 and 46), are likely extracellular transmembrane proteins because of the presence of strong secretion leaders, C-terminal transmembrane domains and PAN and ZP domains that are likely glycosylated. Additionally, some fraction of the PANZP proteins may be cleaved from the membrane (e.g., at a polybasic site after the ZP domain) by the action of an endoproteinases (e.g., a furin-type endopeptidase).

RNA Mediated Interference (RNAi)

A double stranded RNA (dsRNA) molecule can be used to inactivate a gene encoding a PAN and ZP domain protein (PANZP) in a cell by a process known as RNA mediated-interference (Fire et al. (1998) *Nature* 391:806-811, and Gönczy et al. (2000) *Nature* 408:331-336). The dsRNA molecule can have the nucleotide sequence of a PANZP nucleic acid (preferably exonic) or a fragment thereof. For example, the molecule can comprise at least 50, at least 100, at least 200, at least 300, or at least 500 or more contiguous nucleotides of a PANZP gene. The dsRNA molecule can be delivered to nematodes via direct injection, by soaking nematodes in aqueous solution containing concentrated dsRNA, or by raising bacteriovorous nematodes on *E. coli* genetically engineered to produce the dsRNA molecule (Kamath et al. (2000) *Genome Biol.* 2; Tabara et al. (1998) *Science* 282:430-431).

PANZP RNAi by feeding

C. elegans were grown on lawns of *E. coli* genetically engineered to produce double-stranded RNA (dsRNA) designed to inhibit PANZP1 or PANZP2 expression in order to investigate whether PANZP1 or PANZP2 expression is essential. Briefly, *E. coli* were transformed with genomic fragments encoding portions of the *C. elegans* PANZP1 or the PANZP2 gene. A 1048 nucleotide fragment was amplified from the PANZP1 gene using oligo-nucleotide primers containing the sequences 5'-TCAGTGACGTTATGTCCTCC-3' (SEQ ID NO: 21) and 5'-TGACAGATGGAACATTCTCC-3' (SEQ ID NO: 22). A 926 nucleotide fragment was amplified from the PANZP2 gene using oligo-nucleotide primers containing the sequences 5'-ACTTCAGGACACGACTTGAC-3' (SEQ ID NO: 23) and 5'-CAATCAGAGATGGTAACTCC-3' (SEQ ID NO: 24) respectively. The cloned PANZP1 and PANZP2 genomic fragments were cloned separately into an *E. coli* expression vector between opposing T7 polymerase promoters. The expression clones were separately transformed into a strain of *E. coli* that carries an IPTG-inducible T7 polymerase. As a control, *E. coli* was transformed with a gene encoding the Green Fluorescent Protein (GFP).

Feeding RNAi was initiated from *C. elegans* L4 larvae at 23°C on NGM plates containing IPTG and *E. coli* expressing the *C. elegans* PANZP1 dsRNA, PANZP2 dsRNA or GFP dsRNA. *C. elegans* exposed to *E. coli* expressing PANZP1 dsRNA or PANZP2 dsRNA exhibited severe reduction in brood size of the fed or P0 animal. In addition, of the eggs laid, only a fraction hatched, and the hatched animals died at the L1 or L2 larval stage. The sequence of the PANZP1 and PANZP2 genes is of sufficiently high complexity (i.e., unique) such that the RNAi is not likely to represent cross reactivity with other genes.

C. elegans cultures grown in the presence of *E. coli* expressing dsRNA from the PANZP1 or the PANZP2 gene were strongly impaired indicating that the PANZP genes provide essential functions in nematodes and that dsRNA from the PAN and ZP containing receptor-like genes is lethal when ingested by *C. elegans*. These results demonstrate that PANZPs are important for the viability of *C. elegans* and suggest that they are useful targets for the development of compounds (small molecule, peptide, protein or otherwise) that reduce the viability of nematodes.

Orthologs of PANZP1 are present in intestinal cDNA libraries

An expressed sequence tag (EST) apparently encoding an orthologue of PANZP1 was identified from an *Ascaris suum* intestinal cDNA. The presence of a PANZP1 orthologue in an intestinal library suggests PANZP1 is expressed in the nematode intestine. In addition, the PANZP1 protein sequence contains sequences suggesting that PANZP1 is a transmembrane protein and that the PAN domains are extracellular. Together, these observations indicate that the PAN domains of PANZP1 may be accessible to drugs, peptides or proteins (e.g., antibodies) ingested by the worm.

PAN domains have been shown to be involved in protein-protein interactions in other systems (Renne et al. (2002) *J. Biol. Chem.* 277(7):4892-9). Therefore, one approach to inactivating the function of PANZP polypeptides is to interfere with protein-protein interactions using an antibody against a PAN domain, a peptide comprising a PAN domain or a portion of a PAN domain, or any peptide capable of strong interaction with a native PAN domain. These entities may act as dominant negatives that will block the function of PANZP1 proteins. The intact protein fragments thereof can, for example, be over-expressed in plants where they could negatively interact with PANZP proteins of plant parasitic nematodes upon ingestion by the nematodes. Alternatively the intact proteins or fragments could be injected into or fed to a host animal and thus disrupt the function of animal parasitic nematode PANZP proteins upon ingestion by the nematodes. Since PANZP1 performs an essential function, entities that disrupt its function will have anthelmintic properties.

Identification of Additional PAN and ZP Domain Containing Receptor-Like Sequences

A skilled artisan can utilize the methods provided in the example above to identify additional nematode PAN and ZP domain containing receptor-like sequences, e.g., PANZP sequences from nematodes other than *S. stercoralis*, *M. javanica*, *H. glycines*, *B. malayi*, or *C. elegans*. In addition, nematode PANZP sequences can be identified by a variety of methods including computer-based database searches, hybridization-based methods, and functional complementation.

Database Identification A nematode PAN and ZP containing receptor-like sequence can be identified from a sequence database, e.g., a protein or nucleic acid database using a sequence disclosed herein as a query. Sequence comparison programs can be used to

compare and analyze the nucleotide or amino acid sequences. One such software package is the BLAST suite of programs from the National Center for Biotechnology Institute (NCBI; Altschul et al. (1997) *Nucl. Acids Research* 25:3389-3402). A PAN and ZP containing receptor-like sequence of the invention can be used to query a sequence database, such as

5 **nr**, **dbest** (expressed sequence tag (EST) sequences), and **htgs** (high-throughput genome sequences), using a computer-based search, e.g., FASTA, BLAST, or PSI-BLAST search. Homologous sequences in other species (e.g., plants and animals) can be detected in a PSI-BLAST search of a database such as **nr** (E value = 10, H value = 1e-2, using, for example, four iterations; available at www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov). Sequences so obtained can be used to

10 construct a multiple alignment, e.g., a ClustalX alignment, and/or to build a phylogenetic tree, e.g., in ClustalX using the Neighbor-Joining method (Saitou et al. (1987) *Mol. Biol. Evol.* 4:406-425) and bootstrapping (1000 replicates; Felsenstein (1985) *Evolution* 39:783-791). Distances may be corrected for the occurrence of multiple substitutions [$D_{\text{corr}} = -\ln(1 - D - D^2/5)$ where D is the fraction of amino acid differences between two sequences] (Kimura

15 (1983) *The Neutral Theory of Molecular Evolution*, Cambridge University Press).

The aforementioned search strategy can be used to identify PAN and ZP domain containing receptor-like sequences in nematodes of the following non-limiting, exemplary genera: Plant-parasitic nematode genera: *Afrina*, *Anguina*, *Aphelenchoides*, *Belonolaimus*, *Bursaphelenchus*, *Cacopaurus*, *Cactodera*, *Criconema*, *Criconemoides*, *Cryphodera*,

20 *Ditylenchus*, *Dolichodorus*, *Dorylaimus*, *Globodera*, *Helicotylenchus*, *Hemicriconemoides*, *Hemicycliophora*, *Heterodera*, *Hirschmanniella*, *Hoplolaimus*, *Hypsoperine*, *Longidorus*, *Meloidogyne*, *Mesoanguina*, *Nacobbus*, *Nacobbodera*, *Panagrellus*, *Paratrichodorus*, *Paratylenchus*, *Pratylenchus*, *Pterotylenchus*, *Punctodera*, *Radopholus*, *Rhadinaphelenchus*, *Rotylenchulus*, *Rotylenchus*, *Scutellonema*, *Subanguina*, *Thecavermiculatus*, *Trichodorus*,

25 *Turbatrix*, *Tylenchorhynchus*, *Tylenchulus*, *Xiphinema*.

Animal- and human-parasitic nematode genera: *Acanthocheilonema*, *Aelurostrongylus*, *Ancylostoma*, *Angiostrongylus*, *Anisakis*, *Ascaris*, *Ascarops*, *Bunostomum*, *Brugia*, *Capillaria*, *Chabertia*, *Cooperia*, *Crenosoma*, *Cyathostome species* (Small Strongyles), *Dictyocaulus*, *Diectophyma*, *Dipetalonema*, *Dirofiliaria*, *Dracunculus*,

30 *Draschia*, *Elaneophora*, *Enterobius*, *Filaroides*, *Gnathostoma*, *Gonylonema*, *Habronema*, *Haemonchus*, *Hyostrongylus*, *Lagochilascaris*, *Litomosoides*, *Loa*, *Mammomonogamus*,

Mansonella, Muellerius, Metastrongylid, Necator, Nematodirus, Nippostrongylus, Oesophagostomum, Ollulanus, Onchocerca, Ostertagia, Oxyspirura, Oxyuris, Parafilaria, Parascaris, Parastrongyloides, Parelaphostrongylus, Physaloptera, Physocephalus, Protostrongylus, Pseudoterranova, Setaria, Spirocerca, Stephanurus, Stephanofilaria,
 5 *Strongyloides, Strongylus, Spirocerca, Syngamus, Teladorsagia, Thelazia, Toxascaris, Toxocara, Trichinella, Trichostrongylus, Trichuris, Uncinaria, and Wuchereria.*

Particularly preferred nematode genera include: Plant: *Anguina, Aphelenchoides, Belonolaimus, Bursaphelenchus, Ditylenchus, Dolichodorus, Globodera, Heterodera, Hoplolaimus, Longidorus, Meloidogyne, Nacobbus, Pratylenchus, Radopholus, Rotylenchus,*
 10 *Tylenchulus, Xiphinema.*

Animal and human: *Ancylostoma, Ascaris, Brugia, Capillaria, Cooperia, Cyathostome species, Dictyocaulus, Dirofiliaria, Dracunculus, Enterobius, Haemonchus, Necator, Nematodirus, Oesophagostomum, Onchocerca, Ostertagia, Oxyspirura, Oxyuris, Parascaris, Strongyloides, Strongylus, Syngamus, Teladorsagia, Thelazia, Toxocara,*
 15 *Trichinella, Trichostrongylus, Trichuris, and Wuchereria.*

Particularly preferred nematode species include: Plant: *Anguina tritici, Aphelenchoides fragariae, Belonolaimus longicaudatus, Bursaphelenchus xylophilus, Ditylenchus destructor, Ditylenchus dipsaci, Dolichodorus heterocephalous, Globodera pallida, Globodera rostochiensis, Globodera tabacum, Heterodera avenae, Heterodera cardiolata, Heterodera carotae, Heterodera cruciferae, Heterodera glycines, Heterodera major, Heterodera schachtii, Heterodera zae, Hoplolaimus tylenchiformis, Longidorus sylphus, Meloidogyne acronea, Meloidogyne arenaria, Meloidogyne chitwoodi, Meloidogyne exigua, Meloidogyne graminicola, Meloidogyne hapla, Meloidogyne incognita, Meloidogyne javanica, Meloidogyne nassi, Nacobbus batatiformis, Pratylenchus brachyurus, Pratylenchus coffeae, Pratylenchus penetrans, Pratylenchus scribneri, Pratylenchus zae, Radopholus similis, Rotylenchus reniformis, Tylenchulus semipenetrans, Xiphinema americanum.*
 20
 25

Animal and human: *Ancylostoma braziliense, Ancylostoma caninum, Ancylostoma ceylanicum, Ancylostoma duodenale, Ancylostoma tubaeforme, Ascaris suum, Ascaris lumbricoides, Brugia malayi, Capillaria bovis, Capillaria plica, Capillaria feliscati, Cooperia oncophora, Cooperia punctata, Cyathostome species, Dictyocaulus filaria, Dictyocaulus viviparus, Dictyocaulus arnfieldi, Dirofiliaria immitis, Dracunculus insignis,*
 30

Enterobius vermicularis, *Haemonchus contortus*, *Haemonchus placei*, *Necator americanus*, *Nematodirus helvetianus*, *Oesophagostomum radiatum*, *Onchocerca volvulus*, *Onchocerca cervicalis*, *Ostertagia ostertagi*, *Ostertagia circumcincta*, *Oxyuris equi*, *Parascaris equorum*, *Strongyloides stercoralis*, *Strongylus vulgaris*, *Strongylus edentatus*, *Syngamus trachea*,
 5 *Teladorsagia circumcincta*, *Toxocara cati*, *Trichinella spiralis*, *Trichostrongylus axei*, *Trichostrongylus colubriformis*, *Trichuris vulpis*, *Trichuris suis*, *Trichuris trichiura*, and *Wuchereria bancrofti*.

Further, a PAN and ZP domain containing receptor-like sequence can be used to identify additional PANZP sequence homologs within a genome. Multiple homologous
 10 copies of a PANZP sequence can be present. For example, a nematode PANZP sequence can be used as a seed sequence in an iterative PSI-BLAST search (default parameters, substitution matrix = Blosum62, gap open = 11, gap extend = 1) of a non redundant database such as **wormpep** (E value=1e-2, H value = 1e-4, using, for example 4 iterations) to determine the number of homologs in a database, e.g., in a database containing the complete
 15 genome of an organism. A nematode PANZP sequence can be present in a genome along with 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, or more homologs.

Hybridization Methods A nematode PAN and ZP domain containing receptor-like sequence can be identified by a hybridization-based method using a sequence provided herein as a probe. For example, a library of nematode genomic or cDNA clones can be
 20 hybridized under low stringency conditions with the probe nucleic acid. Stringency conditions can be modulated to reduce background signal and increase signal from potential positives. Clones so identified can be sequenced to verify that they encode PANZP sequences.

Another hybridization-based method utilizes an amplification reaction (e.g., the
 25 polymerase chain reaction (PCR)). Oligonucleotides, e.g., degenerate oligonucleotides, are designed to hybridize to a conserved region of a PANZP sequence (e.g., a region conserved in the nematode sequences depicted in FIGS. 7 and 8). The oligonucleotides are used as primers to amplify a PANZP sequence from template nucleic acid from a nematode, e.g., a nematode other than *S. stercoralis*, *M. javanica*, *H. glycines*, *B. malayi*, or *C. elegans*. The
 30 amplified fragment can be cloned and/or sequenced.

Full-length cDNA and Sequencing Methods The following methods can be used, e.g., alone or in combination with another method described herein, to obtain full-length nematode PANZP genes and determine their sequences.

Plant parasitic nematodes are maintained on greenhouse pot cultures depending on nematode preference. Root Knot Nematodes (*Meloidogyne* sp) are propagated on Rutgers tomato (Burpee), while Soybean Cyst Nematodes (*Heterodera* sp) are propagated on soybean. Total nematode RNA is isolated using the TRIZOL reagent (Gibco BRL). Briefly, 2 ml of packed worms are combined with 8 ml TRIZOL reagent and solubilized by vortexing. Following 5 minutes of incubation at room temperature, the samples are divided into smaller volumes and spun at 14,000 x g for 10 minutes at 4 °C to remove insoluble material. The liquid phase is extracted with 200 µl of chloroform, and the upper aqueous phase is removed to a fresh tube. The RNA is precipitated by the addition of 500 µl of isopropanol and centrifuged to pellet. The aqueous phase is carefully removed, and the pellet is washed in 75% ethanol and spun to re-collect the RNA pellet. The supernatant is carefully removed, and the pellet is air dried for 10 minutes. The RNA pellet is resuspended in 50 µl of DEPC-H₂O and analyzed by spectrophotometry at λ 260 and 280 nm to determine yield and purity. Yields can be 1-4 mg of total RNA from 2 ml of packed worms.

Full-length cDNAs can be generated using 5' and 3' RACE techniques in combination with EST sequence information. The molecular technique 5' RACE (Life Technologies, Inc., Rockville, MD) can be employed to obtain complete or near-complete 5' ends of cDNA sequences for nematode PANZP cDNA sequences. Briefly, following the instructions provided by Life Technologies, first strand cDNA is synthesized from total nematode RNA using Murine Leukemia Virus Reverse Transcriptase (M-MLV RT) and a gene specific "antisense" primer, e.g., designed from available EST sequence. RNase H is used to degrade the original mRNA template. The first strand cDNA is separated from unincorporated dNTPs, primers, and proteins using a GlassMAX Spin Cartridge. Terminal deoxynucleotidyl transferase (TdT) is used to generate a homopolymeric dC tailed extension by the sequential addition of dCTP nucleotides to the 3' end of the first strand cDNA. Following addition of the dC homopolymeric extension, the first strand cDNA is directly amplified without further purification using Taq DNA polymerase, a gene specific "antisense" primer designed from available EST sequences to anneal to a site located within

the first strand cDNA molecule, and a deoxyinosine-containing primer that anneals to the homopolymeric dC tailed region of the cDNA in a polymerase chain reaction (PCR). 5' RACE PCR amplification products are cloned into a suitable vector for further analysis and sequencing.

5 The molecular technique, 3' RACE (Life Technologies, Inc., Rockville, MD), can be employed to obtain complete or near-complete 3' ends of cDNA sequences for nematode PANZP cDNA sequences. Briefly, following the instructions provided by Life Technologies (Rockville, MD), first strand cDNA synthesis is performed on total nematode RNA using SuperScript™ Reverse Transcriptase and an oligo-dT primer that anneals to the polyA tail.

10 Following degradation of the original mRNA template with RNase H, the first strand cDNA is directly PCR amplified without further purification using Taq DNA polymerase, a gene specific primer designed from available EST sequences to anneal to a site located within the first strand cDNA molecule, and a "universal" primer which contains sequence identity to 5' end of the oligo-dT primer. 3' RACE PCR amplification products are cloned into a suitable

15 vector for further analysis and sequencing.

Nucleic Acid Variants

Isolated nucleic acid molecules of the present invention include nucleic acid molecules that have an open reading frame encoding a PANZP polypeptide. Such nucleic acid molecules include molecules having: the sequences recited in SEQ ID NO: 1, 2, 7, 8,

20 and 9 and the sequence coding for the PANZP proteins recited in SEQ ID NO: 3, 4, 10, 11, and 12. These nucleic acid molecules can be used, for example, in a hybridization assay to detect the presence of a *S. stercoralis*, *M. javanica*, *H. glycines*, or *B. malayi* nucleic acid in a sample.

The present invention includes nucleic acid molecules such as the ones shown in SEQ

25 ID NO: 1, 2, 7, 8, and 9 that may be subjected to mutagenesis to produce single or multiple nucleotide substitutions, deletions, or insertions. Nucleotide insertional derivatives of the nematode gene of the present invention include 5' and 3' terminal fusions as well as intra-sequence insertions of single or multiple nucleotides. Insertional nucleotide sequence variants are those in which one or more nucleotides are introduced into a predetermined site

30 in the nucleotide sequence, although random insertion is also possible with suitable screening of the resulting product. Deletion variants are characterized by the removal of one or more

nucleotides from the sequence. Nucleotide substitution variants are those in which at least one nucleotide in the sequence has been removed and a different nucleotide inserted in its place. Such a substitution may be silent (e.g., synonymous), meaning that the substitution does not alter the amino acid defined by the codon. Alternatively, substitutions are designed to alter one amino acid for another amino acid (e.g., non-synonymous). A non-synonymous substitution can be conservative or non-conservative. A substitution can be such that activity, e.g., a PANZP activity, is not impaired. A conservative amino acid substitution results in the alteration of an amino acid for a similar acting amino acid, or amino acid of like charge, polarity, or hydrophobicity, e.g., an amino acid substitution listed in Table 4 below. At some positions, even conservative amino acid substitutions can disrupt the activity of the polypeptide.

Table 4: Conservative Amino Acid Replacements

Amino acid	Code	Replace with any of
Alanine	Ala	Gly, Cys, Ser
Arginine	Arg	Lys, His
Asparagine	Asn	Asp, Glu, Gln,
Aspartic Acid	Asp	Asn, Glu, Gln
Cysteine	Cys	Met, Thr, Ser
Glutamine	Gln	Asn, Glu, Asp
Glutamic Acid	Glu	Asp, Asn, Gln
Glycine	Gly	Ala
Histidine	His	Lys, Arg
Isoleucine	Ile	Val, Leu, Met
Leucine	Leu	Val, Ile, Met
Lysine	Lys	Arg, His
Methionine	Met	Ile, Leu, Val
Phenylalanine	Phe	Tyr, His, Trp
Proline	Pro	
Serine	Ser	Thr, Cys, Ala
Threonine	Thr	Ser, Met, Val
Tryptophan	Trp	Phe, Tyr
Tyrosine	Tyr	Phe, His
Valine	Val	Leu, Ile, Met

The current invention also embodies splice variants of nematode PANZP sequences.

Another aspect of the present invention embodies a polypeptide-encoding nucleic acid molecule that is capable of hybridizing under conditions of low stringency (or high

stringency) to the nucleic acid molecule put forth in SEQ ID NO: 1,2, 7, 8, and 9 or their complements.

The nucleic acid molecules that encode for PAN and ZP domain containing receptor-like polypeptides may correspond to the naturally occurring nucleic acid molecules or may
5 differ by one or more nucleotide substitutions, deletions, and/or additions. Thus, the present invention extends to genes and any functional mutants, derivatives, parts, fragments, naturally occurring polymorphisms, homologs or analogs thereof or non-functional molecules. Such nucleic acid molecules can be used to detect polymorphisms of PANZP genes, e.g., in other nematodes. As mentioned below, such molecules are useful as genetic
10 probes; primer sequences in the enzymatic or chemical synthesis of the gene; or in the generation of immunologically interactive recombinant molecules. Using the information provided herein, such as the nucleotide sequence SEQ ID NO: 1, 2, 7, 8, and 9, a nucleic acid molecule encoding an PANZP molecule may be obtained using standard cloning and a screening techniques, such as a method described herein.

15 Nucleic acid molecules of the present invention can be in the form of RNA, such as mRNA, or in the form of DNA, including, for example, cDNA and genomic DNA obtained by cloning or produced synthetically. The DNA may be double-stranded or single-stranded. The nucleic acids may be in the form of RNA/DNA hybrids. Single-stranded DNA or RNA can be the coding strand, also referred to as the sense strand, or the non-coding strand, also
20 known as the anti-sense strand.

One embodiment of the present invention includes a recombinant nucleic acid molecule, which includes the isolated nucleic acid molecules depicted in SEQ ID NO: 1, 2, 7, 8, and 9, inserted in a vector capable of delivering and maintaining the nucleic acid molecule into a cell. The DNA molecule may be inserted into an autonomously replicating vector
25 (suitable vectors include, for example, pGEM3Z and pcDNA3, and derivatives thereof). The vector nucleic acid may be a bacteriophage DNA such as bacteriophage lambda or M13 and derivatives thereof. The vector may be either RNA or DNA, single- or double-stranded, prokaryotic, eukaryotic, or viral. Vectors can include transposons, viral vectors, episomes, (e.g., plasmids), chromosomes inserts, and artificial chromosomes (e.g. BACs or YACs).
30 Construction of a vector containing a nucleic acid described herein can be followed by transformation of a host cell such as a bacterium. Suitable bacterial hosts include, but are not

limited to, *E. coli*. Suitable eukaryotic hosts include yeast such as *S. cerevisiae*, other fungi, vertebrate cells, invertebrate cells (e.g., insect cells), plant cells, human cells, human tissue cells, and whole eukaryotic organisms. (e.g., a transgenic plant or a transgenic animal).

Further, the vector nucleic acid can be used to generate a virus such as vaccinia or

5 baculovirus.

The present invention also extends to genetic constructs designed for polypeptide expression. Generally, the genetic construct also includes, in addition to the encoding nucleic acid molecule, elements that allow expression, such as a promoter and regulatory sequences. The expression vectors may contain transcriptional control sequences that control
10 transcriptional initiation, such as promoter, enhancer, operator, and repressor sequences. A variety of transcriptional control sequences are well known to those in the art and may be functional in, but are not limited to, a bacterium, yeast, plant, or animal cell. The expression vector can also include a translation regulatory sequence (e.g., an untranslated 5' sequence, an untranslated 3' sequence, a poly A addition site, or an internal ribosome entry site), a
15 splicing sequence or splicing regulatory sequence, and a transcription termination sequence. The vector can be capable of autonomous replication or it can integrate into host DNA.

In an alternative embodiment, the DNA molecule is fused to a reporter gene such as β -glucuronidase gene, β -galactosidase (lacZ), chloramphenicol-acetyltransferase gene, a gene encoding green fluorescent protein (and variants thereof), or red fluorescent protein
20 firefly luciferase gene, among others. The DNA molecule can also be fused to a nucleic acid encoding a polypeptide affinity tag, e.g. glutathione S-transferase (GST), maltose E binding protein, protein A, FLAG tag, hexa-histidine, or the influenza HA tag. The affinity tag or reporter fusion joins the reading frames of SEQ ID NO: 1, 2, 7, 8, and/or 9 to the reading frame of the reporter gene encoding the affinity tag such that a translational fusion is
25 generated. Expression of the fusion gene results in translation of a single polypeptide that includes both a nematode PANZP region and reporter protein or affinity tag. The fusion can also join a fragment of the reading frame of SEQ ID NO: 1, 2, 7, 8, and/or 9. The fragment can encode a functional region of the PANZP polypeptides, a structurally intact domain, or an epitope (e.g., a peptide of about 8, 10, 20, or 30 or more amino acids). A nematode
30 PANZP nucleic acid that includes at least one of a regulatory region (e.g., a 5'-regulatory region, a promoter, an enhancer, a 5'-untranslated region, a translational start site, a 3'-

untranslated region, a polyadenylation site, or a 3'-regulatory region) can also be fused to a heterologous nucleic acid. For example, the promoter of a PANZP nucleic acid can be fused to a heterologous nucleic acid, e.g., a nucleic acid encoding a reporter protein.

Suitable cells to transform include any cell that can be transformed with a nucleic acid molecule of the present invention. A transformed cell of the present invention is also herein referred to as a recombinant or transgenic cell. Suitable cells can either be untransformed cells or cells that have already been transformed with at least one nucleic acid molecule. Suitable cells for transformation according to the present invention can either be: (i) endogenously capable of expressing the PANZP protein or; (ii) capable of producing such protein after transformation with at least one nucleic acid molecule of the present invention.

In an exemplary embodiment, a nucleic acid of the invention is used to generate a transgenic nematode strain, e.g., a transgenic *C. elegans* strain. To generate such a strain, nucleic acid is injected into the gonad of a nematode, thus generating a heritable extrachromosomal array containing the nucleic acid (see, e.g., Mello et al. (1991) *EMBO J.* 10:3959-3970). The transgenic nematode can be propagated to generate a strain harboring the transgene. Nematodes of the strain can be used in screens to identify inhibitors specific for a *S. stercoralis*, *M. javanica*, *H. glycines*, or *B. malayi* PANZP polypeptide.

Oligonucleotides

Also provided are oligonucleotides that can form stable hybrids with a nucleic acid molecule of the present invention. The oligonucleotides can be about 10 to 200 nucleotides, about 15 to 120 nucleotides, or about 17 to 80 nucleotides in length, e.g., about 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 80, 100, 120 nucleotides in length. The oligonucleotides can be used as probes to identify nucleic acid molecules, primers to produce nucleic acid molecules, or therapeutic reagents to inhibit nematode PANZP protein activity or production (e.g., antisense, triplex formation, ribozyme, and/or RNA drug-based reagents). The present invention includes oligonucleotides of RNA (ssRNA and dsRNA), DNA, or derivatives of either. The invention extends to the use of such oligonucleotides to protect non-nematode organisms (for example e.g., plants and animals) from disease by reading the viability of infecting nematodes, e.g., using a technology described herein. Appropriate oligonucleotide-containing therapeutic compositions can be administered to a non-nematode organism using techniques known to

those skilled in the art, including, but not limited to, transgenic expression in plants or animals.

Primer sequences can be used to amplify a PAN and ZP domain containing receptor-like nucleic acid or fragment thereof. For example, at least 10 cycles of PCR amplification can be used to obtain such an amplified nucleic acid. Primers can be at least about 8-40, 10-30 or 14-25 nucleotides in length, and can anneal to a nucleic acid "template molecule", e.g., a template molecule encoding an PANZP genetic sequence, or a functional part thereof, or its complementary sequence. The nucleic acid primer molecule can be any nucleotide sequence of at least 10 nucleotides in length derived from, or contained within sequences depicted in SEQ ID NO: 1,2, 7, 8, and/or 9 and their complements. The nucleic acid template molecule may be in a recombinant form, in a virus particle, bacteriophage particle, yeast cell, animal cell, plant cell, fungal cell, or bacterial cell. A primer can be chemically synthesized by routine methods.

This invention embodies any PAN and ZP domain containing receptor-like sequences that are used to identify and isolate similar genes from other organisms, including nematodes, prokaryotic organisms, and other eukaryotic organisms, such as other animals and/or plants.

In another embodiment, the invention provides oligonucleotides that are specific for a *S. stercoralis*, *M. javanica*, *H. glycines*, and *B. malayi* PANZP nucleic acid molecule. Such oligonucleotides can be used in a PCR test to determine if a *S. stercoralis*, *M. javanica*, *H. glycines*, and/or *B. malayi* derived nucleic acid is present in a sample, e.g., to monitor a disease caused *S. stercoralis*, *M. javanica*, *H. glycines*, and/or *B. malayi*.

Protein Production

Isolated PAN and ZP domain containing receptor-like proteins from nematodes can be produced in a number of ways, including production and recovery of the recombinant proteins and/or chemical synthesis of the protein. In one embodiment, an isolated nematode PANZP protein is produced by culturing a cell, e.g., a bacterial, fungal, plant, or animal cell, capable of expressing the protein, under conditions for effective production and recovery of the protein. The nucleic acid can be operably linked to a heterologous promoter, e.g., an inducible promoter or a constitutive promoter. Effective growth conditions are typically, but not necessarily, in liquid media comprising salts, water, carbon, nitrogen, phosphate sources,

minerals, and other nutrients, but may be any solution in which PANZP proteins may be produced.

In one embodiment, recovery of the protein may refer to collecting the growth solution and need not involve additional steps of purification. Proteins of the present invention, however, can be purified using standard purification techniques, such as, but not limited to, affinity chromatography, thermoprecipitation, immunoaffinity chromatography, ammonium sulfate precipitation, ion exchange chromatography, filtration, electrophoresis, hydrophobic interaction chromatography, and others.

The PAN and ZP domain containing receptor-like polypeptide can be fused to an affinity tag, e.g., a purification handle (e.g., glutathione-S-reductase, hexa-histidine, maltose binding protein, dihydrofolate reductases, or chitin binding protein) or an epitope tag (e.g., c-myc epitope tag, FLAG™ tag, or influenza HA tag). Affinity tagged and epitope tagged proteins can be purified using routine art-known methods.

Antibodies Against PAN and ZP domain containing receptor-like Polypeptides

Recombinant PAN and ZP domain containing receptor-like gene products or derivatives thereof can be used to produce immunologically interactive molecules, such as antibodies, or functional derivatives thereof. Useful antibodies include those that bind to a polypeptide that has substantially the same sequence as the amino acid sequences recited in SEQ ID NO: 3, 4, 10, 11 and/or 12, or that has at least 80% similarity over 50 or more amino acids to these sequences. In a preferred embodiment, the antibody specifically binds to a polypeptide having the amino acid sequence recited in SEQ ID NO: 3, 4, 10, 11 and/or 12. The antibodies can be antibody fragments and genetically engineered antibodies, including single chain antibodies or chimeric antibodies that can bind to more than one epitope. Such antibodies may be polyclonal or monoclonal and may be selected from naturally occurring antibodies or may be specifically raised to a recombinant PANZP protein.

Antibodies can be derived by immunization with a recombinant or purified PANZP gene or gene product. As used herein, the term “antibody” refers to an immunoglobulin, or fragment thereof. Examples of antibody fragments include F(ab) and F(ab')₂ fragments, particularly functional ones able to bind epitopes. Such fragments can be generated by proteolytic cleavage, e.g., with pepsin, or by genetic engineering. Antibodies can be

polyclonal, monoclonal, or recombinant. In addition, antibodies can be modified to be chimeric, or humanized. Further, an antibody can be coupled to a label or a toxin.

Antibodies can be generated against a full-length PANZP protein, or a fragment thereof, e.g., an antigenic peptide. Such polypeptides can be coupled to an adjuvant to
 5 improve immunogenicity. Polyclonal serum is produced by injection of the antigen into a laboratory animal such as a rabbit and subsequent collection of sera. Alternatively, the antigen is used to immunize mice. Lymphocytic cells are obtained from the mice and fused with myelomas to form hybridomas producing antibodies.

Peptides for generating PAN and ZP domain containing receptor-like antibodies can
 10 be about 8, 10, 15, 20, 30 or more amino acid residues in length, e.g., a peptide of such length obtained from SEQ ID NO: 3, 4, 10, 11 and/or 12. Useful peptides include those containing a PAN or ZP domain, e.g., a PAN or ZP domain listed in Table 3. Peptides or epitopes can also be selected from regions exposed on the surface of the protein, e.g., hydrophilic or amphipathic regions. An epitope in the vicinity of an active or binding site
 15 can be selected such that an antibody binding such an epitope would block access to the active site or prevent binding. Antibodies reactive with, or specific for, any of these regions, or other regions or domains described herein are provided. An antibody to a PANZP protein can modulate a PANZP binding activity.

Monoclonal antibodies, which can be produced by routine methods, are obtained in
 20 abundance and in homogenous form from hybridomas formed from the fusion of immortal cell lines (e.g., myelomas) with lymphocytes immunized with PANZP polypeptides such as those set forth in SEQ ID NO: 3, 4, 10, 11 and/or 12.

In addition, antibodies can be engineered, e.g., to produce a single chain antibody (see, for example, Colcher et al. (1999) *Ann N Y Acad Sci* 880: 263-280; and Reiter (1996)
 25 *Clin Cancer Res* 2: 245-252). In still another implementation, antibodies are selected or modified based on screening procedures, e.g., by screening antibodies or fragments thereof from a phage display library.

Antibodies of the present invention have a variety of important uses within the scope of this invention. For example, such antibodies can be used: (i) as therapeutic compounds to
 30 passively immunize an animal in order to protect the animal from nematodes susceptible to antibody treatment; (ii) as reagents in experimental assays to detect presence of nematodes;

(iii) as tools to screen for expression of the gene product in nematodes, animals, fungi, bacteria, and plants; and/or (iv) as a purification tool of PANZP protein; (v) as PANZP inhibitors/activators that can be expressed or introduced into plants or animals for therapeutic purposes.

5 An antibody against a PAN and ZP domain containing receptor-like protein can be produced in a plant cell, e.g., in a transgenic plant or in culture (see, e.g., U.S. Patent No. 6,080,560).

 Antibodies that specifically recognize a *S. stercoralis*, *M. javanica*, *H. glycines*, and/or *B. malayi* PANZP proteins can be used to identify *S. stercoralis*, *M. javanica*, *H. glycines*, and/or *B. malayi* nematodes, and, thus, can be used to diagnose and/or monitor a
10 disease caused by *S. stercoralis*, *M. javanica*, *H. glycines*, and/or *B. malayi*.

Immunization

 The PANZP proteins of the invention and fragments thereof (e.g., a fragment that
15 includes one or more PAN or ZP domains) can be used to immunize a mammal, e.g., a human, primate, or dog. The protein or peptide fragment can be introduced into a mammal as a unit dose inoculum in combination with any physiologically suitable diluent. One or more inoculums can be administered. Each inoculum can contain an amount of polypeptide effective to elicit an immune response, preferably a protective immune response that reduces
20 the occurrence of subsequent infection by a nematode, e.g., *S. steroralis* or *B. malayi*. A unit dose can contain, e.g., at least 0.1, preferably at least 0.5 milligrams/kg of body weight of host.

 The PANZP peptide immunogen can contain 10, 20, 30, 50, 100 or more amino acids and can include all or part of a PAN or ZP domain, e.g., a PAN or ZP domain listed in Table
25 3. The PANZP peptide immunogen can include 2, 3, 4, or more PANZP peptides that are the same or different. Moreover, the PANZP peptides can be flanked by other amino acid sequences. Thus, the immunogen can contain, e.g., two copies of a given PAN domain separated by a linker. The immunogen can include one or more portions of one, two or more PANZP proteins. Thus, the immunogen can include a portion of *S. steroralis* or *B. malayi*
30 PANZP1 and a portion of *S. steroralis* PANZP2. The inoculum can include two or more

non-contiguous portions of a PANZP protein, e.g., two or more portions including PAN domains.

The inoculum can include an adjuvant, e.g., complete or incomplete Freund's adjuvant. The PANZP peptide can be linked to a carrier such as tetanus toxoid, human BSA, or KLH. The inoculum can include stabilizers (e.g., sugars, preservatives, wetting agents, emulsifying agents, buffering agents, dyes, and additives) that improve viscosity of syringability. The inoculum can be administered once or multiple times (e.g., a prime and a boost).

A mammal can be inoculated by intravenous, intraperitoneal, intradermal, subcutaneous, or intramuscular method. Inoculation can be via a needle or needleless means.

Nucleic Acids Agents

Also featured are isolated nucleic acids that are antisense to nucleic acids encoding nematode PAN and ZP domain containing receptor-like proteins. An "antisense" nucleic acid includes a sequence that is complementary to the coding strand of a nucleic acid encoding a PANZP protein. The complementarity can be in a coding region of the coding strand or in a noncoding region, e.g., a 5'- or 3'-untranslated region, e.g., the translation start site. The antisense nucleic acid can be produced from a cellular promoter (e.g., a RNA polymerase II or III promoter), or can be introduced into a cell, e.g., using a liposome. For example, the antisense nucleic acid can be a synthetic oligonucleotide having a length of about 10, 15, 20, 30, 40, 50, 75, 90, 120 or more nucleotides in length.

An antisense nucleic acid can be synthesized chemically or produced using enzymatic reagents, e.g., a ligase. An antisense nucleic acid can also incorporate modified nucleotides, and artificial backbone structures, e.g., phosphorothioate derivative, and acridine substituted nucleotides.

Ribozymes The antisense nucleic acid can be a ribozyme. The ribozyme can be designed to specifically cleave RNA, e.g., a PANZP mRNA. Methods for designing such ribozymes are described in U.S. Pat. No. 5,093,246 or Haselhoff and Gerlach (1988) *Nature* 334:585-591. For example, the ribozyme can be a derivative of *Tetrahymena* L-19 IVS RNA in which the nucleotide sequence of the active site is modified to be complementary to a PANZP nucleic acid (see, e.g., Cech et al. U.S. Patent No. 4,987,071; and Cech et al. U.S. Patent No. 5,116,742).

Peptide Nucleic acid (PNA) An antisense agent directed against an PAN and ZP domain containing receptor-like nucleic acid can be a peptide nucleic acid (PNA). See Hyrup et al. (1996) *Bioorganic & Medicinal Chemistry* 4: 5-23) for methods and a description of the replacement of the deoxyribose phosphate backbone for a pseudopeptide backbone. A PNA can specifically hybridize to DNA and RNA under conditions of low ionic strength as a result of its electrostatic properties. The synthesis of PNA oligomers can be performed using standard solid phase peptide synthesis protocols as described in Hyrup et al. (1996) *supra* and Perry-O'Keefe et al. *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci.* 93: 14670-14675.

RNA Mediated Interference (RNAi) A double stranded RNA (dsRNA) molecule can be used to inactivate a PAN and ZP domain containing receptor-like gene in a cell by a process known as RNA mediated-interference (RNAi; e.g., Fire et al. (1998) *Nature* 391:806-811, and Gönczy et al. (2000) *Nature* 408:331-336). The dsRNA molecule can have the nucleotide sequence of a PANZP nucleic acid described herein or a fragment thereof. The molecule can be injected into a cell, or a syncytium, e.g., a nematode gonad as described in Fire et al., *supra*. Alternatively, the molecule can be used to eradicate a nematode infection in vertebrates or other animals by delivery to a nematode-infected animal by injection or oral dosing.

Transgenic RNAi A double stranded RNA (dsRNA) molecule can be used to inactivate a PAN and ZP domain containing receptor-like gene in a cell by a process known as RNA mediated-interference (RNAi; e.g., Fire et al. (1998) *Nature* 391:806-811, and Gönczy et al. (2000) *Nature* 408:331-336). The dsRNA molecule can have the nucleotide sequence of all or a portion of a PANZP nucleic acid described herein or a fragment thereof. The RNAi triggering molecule can be produced by a transgenic plant engineered to produce dsRNA homologous to a PAN ZP domain-containing receptor-like gene and delivered to a plant parasitic nematode when it attacks and/or feeds on the transgenic plant. Various techniques are known in the art for expressing in plants nucleic acid molecule that inactivate a selected gene, including a nematode gene via RNAi or a related mechanism (see, e.g., Boutla et al. (2002) *Nucl. Acids Res.* 30:1688; and Wesley et al.. (2001) *Plant J.* 27:581).

Screening Assays

Another embodiment of the present invention is a method of identifying a compound capable of altering (e.g., inhibiting or enhancing) the activity of PANZP molecules. This

method, also referred to as a “screening assay,” herein, includes, but is not limited to, the following procedure: (i) contacting an isolated PANZP protein (or a portion thereof, e.g., a PAN or ZP domain) with a test inhibitory compound under conditions in which, in the absence of the test compound, the protein has PANZP activity; and (ii) determining if the test compound alters the PANZP activity (i.e., binding of PANZP to its substrates). Suitable inhibitors or activators that alter a nematode PANZP activity include compounds that interface directly with a nematode PANZP protein substrate binding interaction. Compounds can also interact with other regions of the nematode PANZP protein outside the binding interface and enhance or interfere with PANZP-substrate interactions (e.g., allosteric effects).

Compounds A test compound can be a large or small molecule, for example, an organic compound with a molecular weight of about 100 to 10,000; 200 to 5,000; 200 to 2000; or 200 to 1,000 daltons. A test compound can be any chemical compound, for example, a small organic molecule, a carbohydrate, a lipid, an amino acid, a polypeptide, a nucleoside, a nucleic acid, or a peptide nucleic acid. Small molecules include, but are not limited to, metabolites, metabolic analogues, peptides, peptidomimetics (e.g., peptoids), amino acids, amino acid analogs, polynucleotides, polynucleotide analogs, nucleotides, nucleotide analogs, organic or inorganic compounds (i.e., including heteroorganic and organometallic compounds). Compounds and components for synthesis of compounds can be obtained from a commercial chemical supplier, e.g., Sigma-Aldrich Corp. (St. Louis, MO). The test compound or compounds can be naturally occurring, synthetic, or both. A test compound can be the only substance assayed by the method described herein. Alternatively, a collection of test compounds can be assayed either consecutively or concurrently by the methods described herein.

Compounds can act by allosteric inhibition or by directly by preventing the substrate PANZP interaction.

A high-throughput method can be used to screen large libraries of chemicals. Such libraries of candidate compounds can be generated or purchased, e.g., from Chembridge Corp. (San Diego, CA). Libraries can be designed to cover a diverse range of compounds. For example, a library can include 10,000, 50,000, or 100,000 or more unique compounds. Merely by way of illustration, a library can be constructed from heterocycles including pyridines, indoles, quinolines, furans, pyrimidines, triazines, pyrroles, imidazoles,

naphthalenes, benzimidazoles, piperidines, pyrazoles, benzoxazoles, pyrrolidines, thiophenes, thiazoles, benzothiazoles, and morpholines. A library can be designed and synthesized to cover such classes of chemicals, e.g., as described in DeWitt et al. (1993) *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U.S.A.* 90:6909-6913; Erb et al. (1994) *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 91:11422-11426; 5 Zuckermann et al. (1994) *J. Med. Chem.* 37:2678-2685; Cho et al. (1993) *Science* 261:1303-1305; Carrell et al. (1994) *Angew. Chem. Int. Ed. Engl.* 33:2059; Carell et al. (1994) *Angew. Chem. Int. Ed. Engl.* 33:2061; and Gallop et al. (1994) *J. Med. Chem.* 37:1233-1251.

Organism-based Assays Organisms can be grown in microtiter plates, e.g., 6-well, 32-well, 64-well, 96-well, 384-well plates.

10 In one embodiment, the organism is a nematode. The nematodes can be genetically modified. Non-limiting examples of such modified nematodes include: 1) nematodes or nematode cells (*S. stercoralis*, *M. javanica*, *H. glycines*, *B. malayi* and/or *C. elegans*) having one or more PANZP genes inactivated (e.g., using RNA mediated interference); 2) nematodes or nematode cells expressing a heterologous PANZP gene, e.g., an PANZP gene from another 15 species; and 3) nematodes or nematode cells having one or more endogenous PANZP genes inactivated and expressing a heterologous PANZP gene, e.g., a *S. stercoralis*, *M. javanica*, *H. glycines*, *B. malayi* and/or *C. elegans* PANZP gene as described herein.

A plurality of candidate compounds, e.g., a combinatorial library, can be screened. The library can be provided in a format that is amenable for robotic manipulation, e.g., in 20 microtitre plates. Compounds can be added to the wells of the microtiter plates. Following compound addition and incubation, viability and/or reproductive properties of the nematodes or nematode cells are monitored.

The compounds can also be pooled, and the pools tested. Positive pools are split for subsequent analysis. Regardless of the method, compounds that decrease the viability or 25 reproductive ability of nematodes, nematode cells, or progeny of the nematodes are considered lead compounds.

In another embodiment, the compounds can be tested on a microorganism or a eukaryotic or mammalian cell line, e.g., rabbit skin cells, Chinese hamster ovary cells (CHO), and/or Hela cells. For example, CHO cells absent for PANZP genes, but expressing 30 a nematode PANZP gene can be used. The generation of such strains is routine in the art. As described above for nematodes and nematode cells, the cell lines can be grown in microtitre

plates, each well having a different candidate compound or pool of candidate compounds. Growth is monitored during or after the assay to determine if the compound or pool of compounds is a modulator of a nematode PANZP polypeptide.

In Vitro Binding Assays The screening assay can also be a cell-free binding assay, e.g., an assay to identify compounds that bind a nematode PANZP polypeptide. For example, a nematode PANZP polypeptide can be purified and labeled. The labeled polypeptide is contacted to beads; each bead has a tag detectable by mass spectroscopy, and test compound, e.g., a compound synthesized by combinatorial chemical methods. Beads to which the labeled polypeptide is bound are identified and analyzed by mass spectroscopy. The beads can be generated using “split-and-pool” synthesis. The method can further include a second assay to determine if the compound alters the activity of the PANZP polypeptide.

Optimization of a Compound Once a lead compound has been identified, standard principles of medicinal chemistry can be used to produce derivatives of the compound. Derivatives can be screened for improved pharmacological properties, for example, efficacy, pharmacokinetics, stability, solubility, and clearance. The moieties responsible for a compound’s activity in the above-described assays can be delineated by examination of structure-activity relationships (SAR) as is commonly practiced in the art. One can modify moieties on a lead compound and measure the effects of the modification on the efficacy of the compound to thereby produce derivatives with increased potency. For an example, see Nagarajan et al. (1988) *J. Antibiot.* 41:1430-1438. A modification can include N-acylation, amination, amidation, oxidation, reduction, alkylation, esterification, and hydroxylation. Furthermore, if the biochemical target of the lead compound is known or determined, the structure of the target and the lead compound can inform the design and optimization of derivatives. Molecular modeling software to do this is commercially available (e.g., Molecular Simulations, Inc.). “SAR by NMR,” as described in Shuker et al. (1996) *Science* 274:1531-1534, can be used to design ligands with increased affinity, by joining lower-affinity ligands.

A preferred compound is one that interferes with the function of a nematode PAN and ZP domain containing receptor-like polypeptide and that is not substantially toxic to plants, animals, or humans. By “not substantially toxic” it is meant that the compound does not substantially affect the activity of animal, or human PAN or ZP containing proteins. Thus,

particularly desirable inhibitors of *S. stercoralis*, *M. javanica*, *H. glycines*, *B. malayi* and/or *C. elegans* PANZP do not substantially inhibit human plasminogen, hepatocyte growth factor, Factor XI, or uromodulin activity of vertebrates, e.g., humans for example.

Standard pharmaceutical procedures can be used to assess the toxicity and therapeutic efficacy of a modulator of a PANZP activity. The LD50 (the dose lethal to 50% of the population) and the ED50 (the dose therapeutically effective in 50% of the population) can be measured in cell cultures, experimental plants (e.g., in laboratory or field studies), or experimental animals. Optionally, a therapeutic index can be determined which is expressed as the ratio: LD50/ED50. High therapeutic indices are indicative of a compound being an effective PANZP inhibitor, while not causing undue toxicity or side effects to a subject (e.g., a host plant or host animal).

Alternatively, the ability of a candidate compound to modulate a non-nematode PAN or ZP containing polypeptide is assayed, e.g., by a method described herein. For example, the binding affinity of a candidate compound for a mammalian PAN containing polypeptide can be measured and compared to the binding affinity for a nematode PANZP polypeptide.

The aforementioned analyses can be used to identify and/or design a modulator with specificity for nematode PAN and ZP domain containing receptor-like polypeptide over vertebrate or other animal (e.g., mammalian) PAN or ZP containing polypeptides. Suitable nematodes to target are any nematodes with the PANZP proteins or proteins that can be targeted by compounds that otherwise inhibit, reduce, activate, or generally effect the activity of nematode PANZP proteins.

Inhibitors of nematode PAN and ZP domain containing receptor-like proteins can also be used to identify PAN and ZP domain containing receptor-like proteins in the nematode or other organisms using procedures known in the art, such as affinity chromatography. For example, a specific antibody may be linked to a resin and a nematode extract passed over the resin, allowing any PANZP proteins that bind the antibody to bind the resin. Subsequent biochemical techniques familiar to those skilled in the art can be performed to purify and identify bound PANZP proteins.

Agricultural Compositions

A compound that is identified as a PAN and ZP domain containing receptor-like polypeptide inhibitor can be formulated as a composition that is applied to plants, soil, or

seeds in order to confer nematode resistance. The composition can be prepared in a solution, e.g., an aqueous solution, at a concentration from about 0.005% to 10%, or about 0.01% to 1%, or about 0.1% to 0.5% by weight. The solution can include an organic solvent, e.g., glycerol or ethanol. The composition can be formulated with one or more agriculturally acceptable carriers. Agricultural carriers can include: clay, talc, bentonite, diatomaceous earth, kaolin, silica, benzene, xylene, toluene, kerosene, N-methylpyrrolidone, alcohols (methanol, ethanol, isopropanol, n-butanol, ethylene glycol, propylene glycol, and the like), and ketones (acetone, methylethyl ketone, cyclohexanone, and the like). The formulation can optionally further include stabilizers, spreading agents, wetting extenders, dispersing agents, sticking agents, disintegrators, and other additives, and can be prepared as a liquid, a water-soluble solid (e.g., tablet, powder or granule), or a paste.

Prior to application, the solution can be combined with another desired composition such as another anthelmintic agent, germicide, fertilizer, plant growth regulator and the like. The solution may be applied to the plant tissue, for example, by spraying, e.g., with an atomizer, by drenching, by pasting, or by manual application, e.g., with a sponge. The solution can also be distributed from an airborne source, e.g., an aircraft or other aerial object, e.g., a fixture mounted with an apparatus for spraying the solution, the fixture being of sufficient height to distribute the solution to the desired plant tissues. Alternatively, the composition can be applied to plant tissue from a volatile or airborne source. The source is placed in the vicinity of the plant tissue and the composition is dispersed by diffusion through the atmosphere. The source and the plant tissue to be contacted can be enclosed in an incubator, growth chamber, or greenhouse, or can be in sufficient proximity that they can be outdoors.

If the composition is distributed systemically thorough the plant, the composition can be applied to tissues other than the leaves, e.g., to the stems or roots. Thus, the composition can be distributed by irrigation. The composition can also be injected directly into roots or stems.

A skilled artisan would be able to determine an appropriate dosage for formulation of the active ingredient of the composition. For example, the ED50 can be determined as described above from experimental data. The data can be obtained by experimentally

varying the dose of the active ingredient to identify a dosage effective for killing a nematode, while not causing toxicity in the host plant or host animal (i.e. non-nematode animal).

A number of embodiments of the invention have been described. Nevertheless, it will be understood that various modifications may be made without departing from the spirit and
5 scope of the invention. Accordingly, other embodiments are within the scope of the following claims.